



**Community Health Workers**  
***Perspectives from Massachusetts***

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**Community Health Workers in Connecticut**  
**September 13, 2012**



## Central MA Area Health Education Center, Inc.



**A 501(c)3 non-profit corporation founded in 1982  
dedicated to eliminating health care disparities through  
enhancing access to quality health care and  
promoting workforce development.**

**[www.cmahec.org](http://www.cmahec.org)**

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts OSD Women Business**

# Outreach Worker Training Institute

Tatyana Gorodetsky, Director



- Core Competency Trainings
- Specialized Health Trainings (NHLBI/CMS)
- Research
- Policy Development
- Clinical Team Integration
- Supervisory Trainings
- CHW Management Trainings and Consultation
- Organizational Capacity Building



*CHW Faculty Partnering in Every Aspect of Program Design*

# MA History: Collaboration, Leadership, and Identification of Opportunities

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- Mid 1960s Anti-poverty programs: CHWs in CHCs
- **MA Department of Public Health**
  - Tenacious Leadership
  - 2005 Study
  - Support of CHW Professional Association
  - Integration into Chronic Disease Prevention/Management
  - Health Care Reform Opportunities

<http://www.mass.gov/dph/communityhealthworkers>

- **MACHW**: Importance of a CHW Professional Association

<http://machw.org/>

- Allies: Legislators, Training Entities...

# Training: An Essential Element

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- ❑ CHEC: Boston Public Health Commission  
(Peggy Hogarty, Director)
- ❑ OWTI of CM AHEC
- ❑ National Education Collaborative  
<http://www.chw-nec.org/>

# OWTI Curriculum: Core Competencies

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- ✓ Community Health Workers: Roles
- ✓ Communication Skills
- ✓ Interpersonal Skills
- ✓ Assessment Skills
- ✓ Cultural Responsiveness Skills
- ✓ Documentation Skills
- ✓ Organizational Skills
- ✓ Advocacy Skills

*Foundation of CHW Education*

# CHW Core Competencies/ Methodology: How Were they Developed?

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- ✓ Based Upon *Weaving the Future*.....
- ✓ Recommendations from National Education Collaborative (NEC)
- ✓ Training Years
- ✓ MDPH, MACHW, CHEC, OWTI Planning Meetings
- ✓ CHW Advisory Council: Workforce and Training Workgroup> Report> Current Statute



It takes a CHW to bring communities to health services and community health expertise to the classroom.

# OWTI Methodology

## Team Instructing: CHW Faculty Partnership

- Enhancing Course Value
- Ensuring Content Authenticity
- Modeling Team Work
- Promoting Professional Development





# OWTI Methodology

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## Participatory Education: Utilizing Adult Learning Principles

- ❑ Creates an interactive learning environment
- ❑ Contextualizes knowledge and skills
- ❑ Facilitates professional networking



# OWTI Methodology

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## Interactive Learning

- ❑ Case Study
- ❑ Role Play
- ❑ Small Group Work
- ❑ Resource identification
- ❑ Healthy lifestyle modeling



# OWTI Methodology

Online Resources at <http://www.cmahec.org>

- ❑ Health and disease specific
- ❑ Programs and services
- ❑ Publications
- ❑ Job posting
- ❑ News and events

The screenshot displays the website for the Central Massachusetts Area Health Education Center (CMAHEC). The header includes the organization's name and logo, along with navigation links for Home, About, News Feeds, Course Registration, and Contact, and a search function. The main content area is titled 'Resources for CHWs' and features a sidebar menu on the left and a main content area on the right. The sidebar menu lists various programs and resources, with 'Resources for CHWs' highlighted. The main content area includes a grid of buttons for 'Web Resources', 'Upcoming Events', 'Trainings', 'Articles', 'Other Resources', and 'Jobs for CHWs'. Below the grid, there is a section for 'Featured Resources' with three links: 'MA Career Information System - Dept of Workforce Development', 'Worcester MA - Mental Health Providers List', and 'Regional Environmental Council's Worcester MA Farmers Markets'. At the bottom, there is a contact information section for Becky Rothberg at [rothberg@cmahec.org](mailto:rothberg@cmahec.org).

# The Massachusetts Experience

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**Collaboration**

**Leadership**

**Education**

**Identification of Opportunities**

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# Massachusetts Health Care Reform: An Opportunity...

What are the opportunities in Connecticut?

# Section 110 of the Health Care Reform Law of 2006: Legislative Mandate to MDPH

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- **Conduct investigation of the CHW workforce:**
  - Use and funding of CHWs
  - CHW role in increasing access to health care
  - CHW role in eliminating health disparities
- **Convene a statewide CHW Advisory Council**
  - Inform the investigation & interpret the findings
  - Develop recommendations for a sustainable CHW program in MA, including training, certification and financing
- **Submit a report of the findings and recommendations to the Legislature**

*Source: Gail Hirsch and Stephanie Anthony: Raising Awareness and Making Change through Public-Private Partnerships: Lessons Learned from a Statewide Community Health Worker Advisory Council in Massachusetts 10/4/09.*

# Section 110 of the Health Care Reform Law of 2006: CHW Advisory Council

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## 14 Agencies Named in the Legislation (30 in total)

- CHW training programs
- Health plans
- CHW workforce
- Health care providers
- Foundations
- Payers
- Employers of CHWs
- Academic institutions
- Health policy advocates
- Healthcare and community-based organizations

- 4 Work Groups
  - Finance
  - Research
  - Survey
  - Workforce Training

# Strengthen Workforce Development: Training and Certification

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- Stabilize current funding for training of CHWs and CHW supervisors;
- Expand statewide access to training;
- Establish a Board of Certification of CHWs.

*Source: Gail Hirsch and Stephanie Anthony: Raising Awareness and Making Change through Public-Private Partnerships: Lessons Learned from a Statewide Community Health Worker Advisory Council in Massachusetts 10/4/09.*



# Certification vs. Certificate

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- Certification
  - Often confused with “earning a certificate”...“certificate program”
  - Terms are Not interchangeable

# Certification

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- Creates a certificate that shows completion of training or education
- Credentialing authority: educational, institutional, or employer-based
- Requires: meeting eligibility, educational, competency requirements
- Describes self as: “certified”
- Activities: not usually specified in law

Jacqueline R. Scott, JD, ML, Health Care Dynamics  
International (HCDI) Thursday, September 22, 2011

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To certify or not to certify...  
that was the question.....

# Concerns about Certification

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- ❑ Would certification change the nature of the CHW field?  
(roles/way work/shift from community accountability/individuals in the field)
  
- ❑ Would it present barriers?:
  - educational
  - financial
  - linguistic/cultural
  - immigration status
  - CORI issues
  
- ❑ Would we lose CHWs who have been practicing for years?
  
- ❑ Would certification be driven by other health professionals?
  
- ❑ Could this “medicalize” the field?
  
- ❑ *Why do it?*

# Why Establish Certification?

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- CHWs and CHW Allies:
  - Greater Recognition by...interdisciplinary colleagues, policy makers...
  - Enhanced Compensation
  - Stabilization of Funding CHW Positions
  - Reimbursement for Services
  - Professional Development
  - Personal/Professional Growth
  
- Stakeholders: e.g., Payers , Employers
  - Clarification of Roles
  - Specification of Competencies
  - Specification of Training

# What do Massachusetts CHWs Think about Certification?

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- As the statewide professional association for community health workers, Massachusetts, MA Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW) reached out to CHWs across the Commonwealth and learned that CHWs are in support of a certificate program. MACHW gathered opinions from CHWs.

- 7 Regional Meetings
- 132 Participants, (93 CHWs).



# CHW Voices Informing Policy

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□ Guiding the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in making recommendations to the legislature regarding the training and certification of CHWs.

- Training and Education Structure;
- Certification Basics;
- Expected Benefits of Certification;
- Employer Relations;
- Precautions.



Source: MACHW Policy Brief 9/5/08

# CHW Voices: MACHW Policy Brief

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- ❑ Training opportunities for CHWs need to be affordable, community-based and available in all regions of the state.
- ❑ This training should be in place before any credential is developed.
- ❑ The credential, if developed, needs to be a less restrictive model so barriers are not created that will change the composition or scope of services of the workforce.
- ❑ The credential, if developed, should not be mandatory for hire by an employer.
- ❑ CHWs are primarily hired because of their connections to and shared experiences with the community. A CHW credential should represent enhanced expertise.
- ❑ All proposed credentialing models provide details of how credentialing will directly lead to increased wages and 3rd party reimbursement in a sustainable manner.



# Chapter 322, Acts of 2010

## Board of Certification of Community Health Workers

Appointed by the Governor

Chaired by the MDPH Commissioner or Designee

Geographic representation (all 6 EOHHS regions)

- **4 CHWs** (from recommendations offered by the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers);
- 1:CHW training organization;
- 1:Massachusetts Public Health Association;
- 1:Massachusetts Association of Health Plans;
- 1:MA League of Community Health Centers;
- 1:Community-based CHW employer; and
- 1:Member of the public, subject to section 9B of chapter 13, and shall be familiar with CHW services.

# Board of Certification of Community Health Workers

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MA Department of Public Health  
Division of Health Professions Licensure

<http://www.mass.gov/dph/boards/chw>



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