

Community Health Workers: Snap Shots of the National Movement and Our Region

New England Regional CHW Summit

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Durrell Fox, CHW



Highlights

- CHW “Umbrella” and Definition
- Moments- Milestones in the CHW Movement
- Some cross state collabs in the region
- CHW Core Roles and Competencies
- CHW Core Values
- CHW Code of Ethics
- Call to Action and Wrap Up



Community Health Worker is an umbrella term for many job titles!



Unifying behind a common term Community Health Worker (CHW)

- Participated in meeting during mid-90's where leaders in the CHW movement agreed upon the term CHW as a "common" umbrella term in the US (CHOW, OW, OE, CHA, Promot., 50+titles...)
- Decided it was important to progress the national movement to sustain the workforce...
- We must find unity or continue the paradigm that exists today with CHW workforce uncertainty and dependence on others for survival



MACHW and National CHW Definitions



Community Health Worker

A Community Health Worker (CHW) *is a public health professional who promotes full and equal access* to necessary health and human services by *applying his or her unique understanding* of the experiences, language and culture of the communities he or she serves.

Taken from MACHW Network Strategic Plan 2001.



A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a *frontline public health worker* who is a *trusted member* of and/or has an *unusually close understanding* of the community s/he serves. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as *liaison/link/intermediary* between health/social services and the community to *facilitate access* to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.



A CHW also *builds individual and community capacity* by *increasing health knowledge* and *self-sufficiency* through a *range of activities* such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy.

(Jan 2009 - BLS SOC CHW code - 21-1094)



(submitted US Dept. of Labor, 7/06)

CHW Perpetual Movement

- Hundreds of years of history of CHWs in the world (Philly 1900's...)
- 1960's more "documented" CHW related activities in the US
- National -local movement synergy 1990's (connecting the dots...)
- HRSA CHW Workforce Study estimated 120,000 CHWs in US (2007)
- Massachusetts CHW Workforce study(s) and reports
- Rhode Island CHW Workforce Report



Don't talk about
Be about it



National Happenings

- **American Public Health Association (APHA) CHW SPIG -now Section!**
- **Center for Sustainable Health Outreach (CSHO) – National CHW Unity Conf.**
- **CHW National Educational Collaborative (CHW - NEC) – CHW Training**
- **HRSA National CHW Workforce Study**



National Happenings cont.

- CHW Organizations (statewide and local) 2000-2012 18 formed
- National CHW Organizations..
- National Research and Financing Meetings
- Various policy statements, research, studies, reports 1990's-present



Other Important Happenings

- CHW certification in two states and legislation in at least ten states
- Medicaid Waivers and/or reimbursement for CHWs
- CHWs mentioned in ACA and National Plans/Strategies (Eliminating Health Disparities, Prevention...)



Building on CHW collaborations across New England



Some CHW conversations

- New England Rural Health Roundtable (early 2000's)
- MA and CT connections (CHW-NEC... Mid 2000's)
- MA and RI conversations 2004 then 2009 to current
- MA and ME conversations and conference in 2005/6



Some more CHW conversations

- Sessions at APHA, Unity and NERMHC meetings/confs. – critical role...
- Over the years discussions have been between CHWs-Allies-Partners-Training Entities-Funders-Employers-State Agencies...
- Can you think of other meetings in the region that I may have missed?



CHW Core Roles and Competencies



CHW Core Competencies

- **Outreach Methods and Strategies**
- **Client and Community Assessment**
- **Effective Communication**
- **Writing and Technical Communication Skills**
- **Culturally Based Communication and Care**
- **Health Education for Behavior Change**
- **Applying Public Health Concepts and Approaches**
- **Community Capacity Building**
- **Special Topics in Community Health**

(Adapted from Annie Casey Foundation funded National Health Advisory Study 1998)



American Association of CHWs Develops CHW Core Values and Code of Ethics



AACHW CHW Core Values

- **Access** - ensure equal access to services...
- **Acceptance** - remain open-minded and are accepting of others...
- **Advocacy** - advocate for communities, individuals and the field of community health work...
- **Excellence** - providing quality services and the most accurate information available to individuals and communities.
- **Learning** - embrace learning as life long, including life experiences and traditional learning.



AACHW CHW Core Values cont

- **Partnership** - partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of CHW programs...
- **Self-determination** - CHWs shall determine the direction of the field.
- **Social Justice** - CHWs are agents of change
- **Strength** - assist families to acknowledge strengths and build upon them
- **Trust** - CHWs have earned the trust of individuals and communities.
- **Unity** - CHWs regardless of discipline, region of the country, job title, and work within or outside of traditional systems are unified in our work to reduce disparities.



AACHW CHW Code of Ethics (1)

Article 1- Responsibilities in the Delivery of Care

- **1.1 - Honesty**
- **1.2 - Confidentiality**
- **1.3 - Scope of Ability and Training**
- **1.4 - Quality of Care**
- **1.5 - Referral to Appropriate Services**



AACHW CHW Code of Ethics (2)

Article 2. Promotion of Equitable Relationships

- **2.1 - Cultural Humility**
- **2.2 - Maintaining the Trust of the Community**
- **2.3 - Respect for Human Rights**
- **2.4 - Anti-Discrimination**
- **2.5 - Client Relationships**



AACHW CHW Code of Ethics (3)

Article 3: Interactions with Other Service Providers

- **3.1 - Cooperation**
- **3.2 - Conduct**
- **3.3 - Self-Presentation**



AACHW CHW Code of Ethics (4)

Article 4. Professional Rights and Responsibilities

- **4.1 - Continuing Education**
- **4.2 - Advocacy for Change in Law and Policy**
- **4.3 - Enhancing Community Capacity**
- **4.4 - Wellness and Safety**
- **4.5 - Loyalty to the Profession**
- **4.6 - Advocacy for the Profession**
- **4.7 - Recognition of Others**



Kujichagulia – Self Determination A CHW Workforce Rallying Cry



If not us
(CHWs-Allies-Partners),
then who?

If not now,
then when?



Call to Action and Activism

- Get involved and stay involved
- Lead the movement (draft the policies and legislation)
- Educate yourselves (CHWs as faculty...)
- Follow the money and document your findings
- Share information
- Demand accountability



Wrap up

- CHWs need continued support from employers, training programs and allies/partners
- CHWs are rising up to lead initiatives and training programs
- CHW training and certification is critical to sustainability and **must be CHW led**
- ACA, ACOs, Medical Homes, enhanced CHCs and healthcare payment reform provide “opportunities” to secure sustainable funding for CHWs



Contact information

Durrell Fox

New England AIDS Education and
Training Center @ UMASS Med. School
Massachusetts Association of CHWs

dfoxnehec@aol.com

