



HealthLinc
YOUR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER®

Corporate Office: 2401 Valley Drive Valparaiso, IN 46383
www.healthlincchc.org

Social Determinants of Health:

*Using Community Health Workers
to Improve Quality of Care*

Corporate Office: 2401 Valley Drive Valparaiso, IN 46383
www.healthincchc.org

HealthLinc

- 11 Sites
- Spans across northern Indiana
- 98,934 encounters in 2016
- Served 25,126 patients in 2016



What is a Community Health Worker?

- Community Health workers were introduced to work through the social determinants of health that are present in the lives of our patients.
- Underserved communities are often found to have multiple layers of barriers that are not directly health issues, but cause additional struggles in achieving their health goals.
- Many of our patients have gone through issues relating to EPA concerns, legal battles, education levels and housing concerns that cause them to forego medical treatment in lieu of other expenses

How Do We Use This Role?

- HealthLinc rolled out the Community Health Worker about a year ago through a grant from the Indiana Community Health Worker association.
- She was deployed to work with those patients at highest risk levels that also were facing comorbidities that were uncontrolled.
- She began her work at our East Chicago facility as the lead crisis was occurring.
- East Chicago has a population of 28,418. Median per capita income of \$26,486. 36% poverty

What Do They Do at a Site?

In our practice the Community Health Worker is responsible for the following areas with the patient:

- Follow up calls to Diabetic patients for case management type work
- Assists patients with the local resources
- Work with providers to understand the unique needs of these high risk patients
- Helps to navigate the medical system so the patient has more opportunities to improve
- Acts as a patient advocate when working with the different systems of community resources.

Real Stories: Dialysis Patient

Patient has had a change of insurance and is no longer being accepted into her dialysis center. She is an undocumented patient who doesn't speak English as a primary language. The current dialysis center actually told her to "go to Mexico" to be treated. Our Community Health Worker stepped into action at this point. She called around to multiple systems and places working to get the patient cared for. She then reached out to her network through Indiana Community Health Worker Association. They were able to use their resources to convince a system that had already said no, to open a spot up for this patient to receive dialysis. Without the network behind this CHW and the knowledge the medical community, this patient would have likely faced dire circumstances and increased the cost of health care for the community as well.

Real Stories, Continued

Elderly patient is living on a fixed social security income. She doesn't have much family around and is consistently showing up to her appointments with untreated conditions. While some providers may mark it up to being noncompliant, we were able to ask her what the situation was that contributed to her health going unmanaged. Short version of the story, the patient is living in extremely substandard conditions with a landlord that is taking advantage of the situation. She is literally being housed in a basement apartment where all of her possessions are floating in Rubbermaid tubs due to the standing water. Karina, our community health worker, visited the patients home to see the conditions. She immediately determined that this was not acceptable living conditions and started to reach out to local community resources to assist this woman to have a safe place to stay. After a significant amount of work, contacting local officials and reaching out to the community, she is able to assist this patient. The community health worker moves the patient out to stay in a paid hotel that very day. She arranges for transportation, food, and helps to set up long term living for her that is both safe and affordable.

How Do We Engage Health Workers On Site?

- Clinical staff will often learn of the need based on information gained during an office visit or a discussion with the patient.
- They will reach out to the community health worker and describe the patient situation and need that is presented.
- Community Health Worker will reach out to the patient and begin the process to see what we can do to try to assist.
- Not a formalized process, but we do track her notes after she assists.

Other Ways to Assist

Currently working with the Medical Legal Partnership at East Chicago

- This is a program where Indiana Legal Services has placed a grant funded attorney at our facility to assist patients with their legal concerns that may have an affect on their health
- Began rollout when the East Chicago community was faced with a major lead crisis that put residents at the lowest income levels in danger of losing their homes and possessions.
- The attorneys will be available to assist with gathering necessary legal identification items, assist with custody concerns, tenant disputes and other legal matters that may affect a patient's whole person health.

Challenges

- Always searching for additional resources to help our patients.
- Seeking ways to specifically help those patients that are undocumented or have a language barrier
- Discovering the need to begin the process
- Learning exactly where this role starts and stops in the health center
- Funding, this is currently a non-billable staff member

Why Us?

Why does this become the responsibility of a health care provider?

- We are a Patient Centered Medical Home
- Patients trust their healthcare provider, but are sometimes unable to follow directions due to life events
- Will end up being a provider discussion with or without the resources to handle it.
- This is how we improve the health of the communities we are in, and live out our mission every day



Thank you!

Corporate Office: 2401 Valley Drive Valparaiso, IN 46383
www.healthlincchc.org