Community Health Workers 101:
An Overview of the Michigan Landscape

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER APPRECIATION MONTH
August 2015

MiCHWA is supported by grants and contracts and housed at the
University of Michigan School of Social Work.
Today’s Agenda

- Overview of CHWs in Michigan
- MiCHWA’s Role
- Your Role & Next Steps
Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance (MiCHWA)

The Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance’s mission is to promote and sustain the integration of community health workers into Michigan’s health and human service systems through coordinated changes in policy and workforce development.
Why MiCHWA?

Existing policy and payment structures encourage CHW programs to depend on time-limited grants and other unsustainable mechanisms that limit the impact CHWs have in their communities to combat health disparities in Michigan.

We believe that CHWs are essential for the improved health of Michigan’s vulnerable populations.
Why MiCHWA?

Community Health Workers need a place to share resources, engage in peer support, and connect with other CHWs and stakeholders looking to promote and sustain the profession. CHWs also need to be drivers of change to the CHW profession.

*We believe that CHWs are the best voice for CHWs across the state – that’s YOU.*
Why MiCHWA?

“CHWs are uniquely qualified to speak about issues that affect the people who reside in the communities we serve. We see what’s going on and, because of the relationship we have with our clients, they trust us and are willing to confide in us. Just as we speak for the people we serve, MiCHWA speaks for us.”

Claireta Thomas, CHW
MiCHWA Annual Meeting 2013
CHWs in Michigan
CHW Definition

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 served. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a 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.

American Public Health Association,
Community Health Worker Section 2009
CHWs in Michigan

• How long have they been here?
  – CHWs were first trained to provide services in Michigan in the 1960s

• Where do they deliver services?
  – Community health centers, community events, client homes, non-profits, schools

• Who employs them?
  – Community-based service agencies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, health systems, non-profits, academic or research institutions, government agencies, health plans
  – Programs including Healthy Start and the Maternal Infant Health Program at some program sites

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
What are CHWs called in Michigan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHW Title</th>
<th>Number of Programs (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Worker</td>
<td>22 (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Outreach Worker</td>
<td>5 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotore/a</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Child Health Worker</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other titles include:**
- Advocate
- Certified Peer Support Specialist
- Community and Neighborhood Navigator
- Community Health Advocate
- Family Health Educator
- Family Health Outreach Worker
- Health Aid
- Health Coach
- Lay Leader Lifestyle Coach

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
Title: CHW title (N=35)
What do CHWs do in Michigan?

• Health promotion and health coaching
• Systems navigation
• Case management and care coordination
• Outreach and community mobilization
• Home-based support
• Community/cultural liaison
• Participatory research

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
Title: Table 11. CHW role (N=32)
What issues do CHWs tackle?

Health Conditions/Issues
- Diabetes
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Heart Disease
- Physical Activity
- Mental/Behavioral Health
- Hypertension
- Health Literacy
- Asthma
- Maternal/Child Health

Other Areas
- Connecting to Resources
- Food Security
- Housing
- Employment
- Education Assistance
- Income Assistance

**Over half of programs** currently tackle chronic disease/healthy lifestyles issues and food security, and **97% of programs** help clients connect to resources.

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
Title: Health issues of clients (N=31)
Title: Social issues (N=31)
Where are CHWs in Michigan?

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
Title: CHW program location by Michigan County (N=37)
Why CHWs?

Ability to engage and establish trust

“The ability of CHWs to engage with, and relate to, our clientele was the original rationale. Over the years, that rationale has not changed! It continues to be the foundational value of the role!”

“As peer mentors, CHWs are best able to form trusting relationships, serve as role models, and engage and retain the most vulnerable families in our community”

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
Title: Table 7. Open-ended responses: rationale for employing CHWs
Why CHWs?

“Cultural Brokers”

“CHWs serve as cultural brokers and bring a unique personal and professional expertise that complements the expertise of our other case management team members (RNs and SWs)”

“CHWs are...culturally competent and closely connected to the community in which they serve”

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014. Title: Table 7. Open-ended responses: rationale for employing CHWs
Why CHWs?

Demonstrated effectiveness

“Our research results showed the effectiveness of CHWs”

“We have used CHWs for a number of years and understand the benefit of this type of workforce being developed in our community”

“Our organization is built on the CHW Model. CHWs are inherent to the organization's mission”

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014.
Title: Table 7. Open-ended responses: rationale for employing CHWs
Why CHWs?

Return on Investment

- CHW programs consistently show return on investment, cost savings, and recovered costs
- Nationally, effective CHW program ROIs routinely range from $2.04-$5.58 per $1 spent
- Michigan examples:
  - Spectrum Health’s Core Health Program: $2.37 in savings for every $1 of cost
  - Muskegon Community Health Project: $350,000 recovered by enrolling patients in Medicaid
MiCHWA’s Role: Policy

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Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance
National Policy: PPACA 2010

The Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act cites CHWs:

- §5101: CHWs listed as “health professionals” and as an important part of the health care workforce; a comprehensive CHW definition is included
- §5313: CDC authorized to fund agencies who train and use CHWs to promote positive health behaviors and outcomes for populations in medically underserved communities; CHW functions include outreach, enrollment, and patient education
- §5403: mandates Area Health Education Centers to provide interdisciplinary training of health professionals, including CHWs

PPACA 2010.
Local & State CHW Activities

• At least 24 states, including the District of Columbia, have established CHW groups
  – Several additional states are pending/starting up

• Regional collaborations emerging
  – DC-MD-VA, New England

• Grassroots groups and state authorities assisting with CHW organizing
  – Examples: Nevada, Virginia

• National association in process of relaunch
Local & State CHW Activities

Resource
National Association of State Health Policy (NASHP) (http://www.nashp.org/state-community-health-worker-models/)

State Community Health Worker Models

By NASHP | May 7th, 2015

As states transform their health systems many are turning to Community Health Workers (CHWs) to tackle some of the most challenging aspects of health improvement, such as facilitating care coordination, enhancing access to community-based services, and addressing social determinants of health. While state definitions vary, CHWs are typically frontline workers who are trusted members of and/or have a unique and intimate understanding of the communities they serve. This map highlights state activity to integrate CHWs into evolving health care systems in key areas such as financing, education and training, certification, and state definitions, roles and scope of practice. The map includes enacted state CHW legislation and provides links to state CHW associations and other leading organizations working on CHW issues in states.
Major Areas to Address

• Occupational Definition
  • Who is a CHW? How can we be sure?
• Training Capacity/Workforce Development
  • What does a CHW need to know? How do we support the role?
• Data
  • What evidence do we need? Where can programs align?
• Financing Models
  • How do we pay for the CHWs and/or the CHW program?

How can we address policy here?

- Occupational Definition
  - Uniting around common language, raising awareness
- Financing Models
  - Assessing feasibility of new financing mechanisms
- Training Capacity/Workforce Development
  - Launching a CHW Standard Curriculum, January 2015
- Data
  - Launching Common Indicators Project, January 2015

CHW Octavia Smith helps report her group's results at the MiCHWA Regional Meeting on certification in Detroit.

Your Role & Next Steps
What can you do? Get involved.

Learn.
  • Who are other CHWs in your area?
  • What issues are being discussed in Michigan? Nationally?

Join.
  • Fill out MiCHWA’s Contact Form
  • Review MiCHWA’s Web site and resources

Act.
  • Participate in a MiCHWA working group
  • Get involved with the CHW Network
Why the CHW Network?

To unite CHWs
To give a place for CHWs to have their voices and opinions heard
To provide opportunities for professional growth
To increase awareness of CHWs in Michigan

*In the Network, we are*
- Equal
- Family
- Supportive
- On Common Ground
- Free to Speak Boldly

Source: http://www.michwa.org/working-groups/mi-chwnetwork/
Why the CHW Network?

- Most programs employ 0 to 10 CHWs
- CHWs are spread all across the state
- CHWs need a place to share their stories, resources, and ideas

Source: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance Program Survey 2014. Title: Number of CHWs employed per program (N=31)
CHW Network Activities 2015

• Conference Calls (Monthly)
• Awareness Months – new!
• michwachws mailing list – new!
• CHW Appreciation Month (August)
• Spectrum Health CHW Conference (August)
• MiCHWA Annual Meeting (October)

Learn more at [http://www.michwa.org/working-groups/michwanetwork/](http://www.michwa.org/working-groups/michwanetwork/)
+ other events throughout the year
Other MiCHWA Activities

• Participate in a working group via conference call
  • Policy & Finance
  • Education & Workforce
  • Communications
  • Evaluation

• Join MiCHWA’s Steering Committee

• Raise awareness about CHWs in your area

• Read our newsletter, sent every other month, for announcements and CHW information

• Attend MiCHWA events throughout the year
Connecting Online

Facebook: Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance
Twitter: @Mi_CHWA
Website: www.michwa.org

Sign up for our newsletter
Get Involved Today!
Questions & Discussion

For more information about MiCHWA
Please visit our website, www.michwa.org

MiCHWA is supported by grants and contracts to the University of Michigan School of Social Work