



Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance (MiCHWA)

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS & INTEGRATED CARE

The need for a peer support workforce

People with mental and substance abuse disorders may die decades earlier than the average person — mostly from **untreated and preventable chronic illnesses** like hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease that are aggravated by poor health habits such as inadequate physical activity, poor nutrition, smoking, and substance abuse. **Barriers to primary care** — coupled with challenges in navigating complex healthcare systems — **have been a major obstacle to care.**

At the same time, primary care settings have become the gateway to the behavioral health system, and primary care providers need support and resources to screen and treat individuals with behavioral and general healthcare needs. The solution lies in integrated care, the systematic coordination of general and behavioral healthcare. **Integrating mental health, substance abuse, and primary care services produces the best outcomes and proves the most effective approach to caring for people with multiple healthcare needs.**

- SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Solutions¹

Health Homes

Health homes play a particularly pivotal role in improving the health care delivery system for individuals with chronic conditions... **The integration of primary care and behavioral health services is critical to the achievement of enhanced outcomes.**

- CMS 2010, Letter to State Medicaid Directors²

- The Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act Section §2703 outlines criteria for health homes
 - Comprehensive care management
 - Care coordination and health promotion
 - Comprehensive transitional care from inpatient to other settings, including appropriate follow up
 - Patient and family support, which includes authorized representatives
 - Referral to community and social support services, if relevant
 - Use of health information technology to link patients to services
- Criteria for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive health home services:
 - Have at least two chronic conditions; or
 - Have one chronic condition and be at risk for another; or
 - Have one serious and persistent mental health condition
- Definition of chronic condition, ACA 2010
 - Includes but is not limited to mental health conditions, asthma, diabetes, substance abuse disorders, heart disease, and obesity

*These core services of a health home **overlap with several CHW roles and tasks**; integrating CHWs into health homes could, then, assist in behavioral and physical health care³*

¹ What is integrated care? SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions Web page. <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/about-us/what-is-integrated-care>. Accessed February 4, 2013.

² Health Homes: State Medicaid directors letter. Michigan Department of Community Health Web page. http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/shCMS_Letter_to_Directors_Health_Home_SMD_Final_11-16-10_2_346164_7.pdf. Updated 2013. Accessed February 4, 2013.

³ Zahn D, Matos S, Findley S, Hicks A. Making the connection: the role of community health workers in health homes. <http://nyshealthfoundation.org/resources-and-reports/resource/making-the-connection-the-role-of-community-health-workers-in-health-homes>. Published September 2012. Accessed February 4, 2013.