

FLORIDA COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER COALITION

Purpose

The Florida Community Health Worker (CHW) Coalition recognizes the important contributions of the Promotores de Salud/CHWs in reaching vulnerable, low income, and underserved members of our community, and promotes the increased engagement of CHWs to support health education and prevention efforts and improve access to health care services.

Community Health Worker Definition

"A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a frontline 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. Some activities performed by the CHW include providing information on available resources, providing social support and informal counseling, advocating for individuals and community health needs, and providing services such as first aid and blood pressure screening. They may also collect data to help identify community health needs."

Origin

The CHW Coalition began in February 2011 as an initiative of the Policy, Environmental and Systems Change (PES) grant awarded to the Florida Department of Health. The grant supported creation of a task force to explore current research, including models, curriculum, and best practices in order to create a viable market place for CHW's. The CHW initiative aligns with the Governor-appointed Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council's (CCRAB) Goal III of the Florida Cancer Plan 2010 addressing access to appropriate health information and effective health services for timely detection, diagnosis and treatment.

Face-to-Face Meeting: June 2nd and 3rd, 2011

The first, annual face-to-face meeting of the Community Health Worker Taskforce was held June 2nd and 3rd 2011. There were approximately 50 participants representing a broad spectrum of professional disciplines, diverse demographics, and various health issues and chronic diseases. Members reflected the various challenges Florida's communities face and amply demonstrated the need and role for community health workers. Over the course of the two-day meeting, four task force committees were formed. At the conclusion of the second day, the committees, Networking/Communications, Sustainability, Curriculum, and Policy each identified key action items to pursue and continued their efforts by convening via conference call, as individual committees.

Coalition Committees

- **Networking/Communications**

During the face-to-face, the entire group decided that the networking/communication committee is the driving force in all-future CHW endeavors. As a result, the actionable items the committee decided upon are as follows:

- Establish a statewide CHW coalition with bylaws, by reviewing other state's coalition's bylaws, identifying organizations and individuals to participate in the coalition, and define and create roles and responsibilities of coalition members.
- Adopt a single definition of the CHW for the state of Florida. (completed)
- Create recognition and branding for CHW in the state of Florida.
- Develop social marketing tools for CHW through technology (i.e. website).
- Evaluate information provided by local health councils in reference to CHWs to better understand access to services and need around the state.

- **Sustainability**

When sustainability was identified as one of the four committees, it was suggested that the group's intent was to identify ways in which to financially sustain the initiative. During the last community health

worker call the sustainability committee decided to combine with the networking/communications committee for the time being, as their identified action items are similar. The goals are as follows:

- Ensure the CHW Taskforce can continue meeting by securing sponsors, and conduct an assessment of the Taskforce in order to determine the preferred frequency and location of the meetings, ascertain finances required for Taskforce to complete work, and identify technical assistance needs.
- Draft bylaws for Taskforce by reviewing examples of bylaws from other coalitions, and editing/drafting new bylaws to meet the needs of the Taskforce.
- Recruit new membership for the Taskforce by reviewing current membership to identify needed professionals.

- **Curriculum**

The curriculum committee challenge is that many of the committee's action items cannot be acted upon, until many of the items presented by the three other committees have been completed. Additionally, proposing curriculum in the state of Florida that pertains to the work of CHWs is a sensitive issue due to the diverse nature of the CHWs in the state of Florida and the populations they serve. The identified goals of the curriculum committee are as follows:

- Adoption of definition of community health worker to use throughout the state; review of the two predominate definitions used by the US Department of Labor and the American Public Health Association.
- Establish core elements of standards for curriculum by acquiring reports from other states on curriculum standards, read and discuss reports, develop a tool for providing standardized feedback on reports, and provided feedback on state reports to sub-group.
- Establish a curriculum review panel to determine who should be involved, who should be invited to be involved, and invite comments and feedback.
- Establish requirements for certification process, and training requirements by using other states as a model to determine how Florida's certification process should be developed.
- Determine what roles DOH, DOE, AHEC, AHCA should have in the certification process.
- Identify a method for when the requirements are completed: e-format, face-to-face meetings and coursework, shadowing, internships, and/or volunteering?
- Determine need for "grandfathering-in" clause by meeting with stakeholders, soliciting feedback on conditions and concerns of "grandfathering-in" clause, and establish conditions under which "grandfathering-in" is the best-case scenario.

- **Policy**

The policy committee's challenge is that there is no consensus on the definition of CHW in the Florida, nor the level or degree of training/education. The policy committee has identified goals that will begin the process of answering these questions and provide recognition to CHWs throughout the state. The action items are as follows:

- Create identity for CHWs statewide by coming to a consensus on a definition.
- Provide evidence, specifically the return on investment and current economic impact of CHWs throughout the state.
- Review other states legislation for models to move forward.
- Create talking points to guide legislative effort.
- Enlist champions for policy and systems change.
- Consider/direct bill creation for no cost/recognition legislation or proclamation in 2012.

To join the Florida Community Health Worker Coalition contact Clifton Skipper at 850245-4444 ext.2944

**For more information check out the Florida Community Health Worker Network website:
<http://www.floridachwn.cop.ufl.edu/>**