



## Community Health Workers

### Evidence Base

#### *Overall Descriptions*

- Brownstein N, Hirsch GR, Rosenthal EL, Rush C. Community health workers “101” for primary care providers and other stakeholders in health care systems. *J Ambul Care Manage.* 2011; 34(3):210-20.

Thorough documentation of the role and contributions of CHWs, with attention to the role of CHWs in multi-disciplinary healthcare teams. An excellent overview of the issues that face the field.

- Rosenthal EL, Wiggins, N, Brownstein JN, Johnson S, Borbón IA, De Zapien JG. *The Final Report of the National Community Health Advisor Study: Weaving the Future.* Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona; 1998.

This is probably the best overall summary about CHW practice. It is widely cited.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. *Community Health Worker National Workforce Study* [Internet]. Rockville (MD): HRSA; 2007 Mar [cited 2013 Mar 4]. Available from: <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/reports/chwstudy2007.pdf>

Describes a comprehensive national study of the CHW workforce and the factors that affected its utilization and development.

- Witmer A, Seifer SD, Finocchio L, Leslie J, O’Neil EH. Community health workers: Integral members of the health care work force. *Am J Public Health.* 1995; 85(8 Pt 1):1055-8.

Seminal study that established credibility for CHWs and is still frequently cited.

#### *Effectiveness of Community Health Workers*

- The Institute for Clinical and Economic Review. *Community Health Workers: A Review of Program Evolution, Evidence on Effectiveness and Value, and Status of Workforce Development in New England. Final Report – July 2013.* Available from: <http://cepac.icer-review.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/CHW-Final-Report-07-26-MASTER2.pdf>

- Balcázar H, Wise S, Rosenthal EL, Ochoa C, Rodriguez J, Hastings D, et al. An ecological model using promotores de salud to prevent cardiovascular disease on the US-Mexico border: the HEART Project. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2012; 9:110100. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd9.110100>

Addresses the effectiveness of CHWs in reducing cardiovascular disease.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Addressing chronic disease through community health workers: A policy and systems-level approach* [Internet]. Atlanta: CDC; 2011 Mar [cited 2013 Mar 5]. Available from: [www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/docs/chw\\_brief.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/docs/chw_brief.pdf)



Provides evidence of the value and effectiveness of CHWs in preventing and managing chronic diseases. It also describes policy changes that can support CHWs and their work.

- Anthony S, Gowler R, Hirsch G, Wilkinson G. Community Health Workers in Massachusetts: Improving Health Care and Public Health. Report of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Community Health Worker Advisory Council [Internet]. Boston: Massachusetts Department of Public Health; 2009 Dec [cited 2013 Mar 5]. Available from: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/com-health-workers/legislature-report.pdf>

A detailed report on CHWs in Massachusetts for the state legislature. Describes who CHWs are and what they do and makes recommendations for sustaining the CHW workforce.

- Gilkey M, Garcia CC, Rush C. Professionalization and the experience-based expert: Strengthening partnerships between health educators and community health workers. *Health Promot Pract*. 2011; 12(2):178-82.

Discusses the importance of health educators and CHWs to work to advance supportive and complementary practices.

- Krieger JW, Takaro TK, Song L, Weaver M. The Seattle-King County Healthy Homes Project: A Randomized, Controlled Trial of a Community Health Worker Intervention to Decrease Exposure to Indoor Asthma Triggers. *Am J Public Health*. 2005; 95(4):652-9.

CHWs conducted a series of home visits for children with asthma. Asthma symptom days and use of urgent health services decreased.

#### *Policy work in other states*

- Mason, T, Wilkinson GW, Nannini, A, Martin CM, Fox DJ, Hirsch G. Winning policy change to promote community health workers: Lessons from Massachusetts in the health reform era. *Am J Public Health*. 2011; 101(12):2211-6.

Provides a summary of how Public Health, a health foundation, and a CHW lead statewide organization worked together to integrate CHWs into Massachusetts public policy.

- Rosenthal EL, Brownstein JN, Rush CH, Hirsch GR, Willaert AM, Scott JR, et al. Community health workers: Part of the solution. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2010; 29(7):1338-42.

The appendix has a useful chart summarizing state policies targeted at increasing the integration of CHWs.

- Matos S, Findley S, Hicks A, Legendre Y, Canto LD. Paving a path to advance the community health worker workforce in New York state: A new summary report and recommendations. New York: The New York State Community Health Worker Initiative; 2011 Oct [cited 2013 Mar 5]. Available from: <http://nyshealthfoundation.org/uploads/resources/paving-path-advance-community-health-worker-october-2011.pdf>



This report describes recommendations of scope of practice, training and credentialing, and financing from a statewide planning effort.

### *Training CHWs*

- Duthie P, Hahn J, Philippi E, Sanchez C. Keys to successful community health worker supervision. *Am J Health Educ.* 2012; 43(1):62-4.
- Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance [Internet]. [Place unknown]: Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance. Frequently Asked Questions; [date unknown] [cited 2013 Mar 5]. Available from: [http://www.mnchwalliance.org/Education\\_FAQ.asp](http://www.mnchwalliance.org/Education_FAQ.asp)
- Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance [Internet]. [Place unknown]: Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance. Minnesota CHW Scope; [date unknown] [cited 2013 Mar 5]. Available from: <http://www.mnchwalliance.org/scope.asp>
- Cleary, J. Community health workers: bridging barriers to care. *Minnesota Health Care News* [Internet]. 2012 Nov [cited 2013 Mar 5];10(11):16-9. Available from: <http://issuu.com/mppub/docs/mhcnov12>

These three documents provide an overview of how Minnesota trains, certifies, and employs CHWs.

- Ruiz Y, Matos S, Kapadia S, Islam N, Cusack A, Kwong S, et al. Lessons learned from a community -academic initiative: The development of a core competency-based training for community-academic initiative community health workers. *Am J Public Health.* 2012; 102(12):2372-9.

The impact of core competencies training on CHWs.

### *Cost Savings: The Financial Return on Investment*

- Felix HC, Mays GP, Stewart MK, Cottoms N, Olson, M. The Care Span: Medicaid savings resulted when community health workers matched those with needs to home and community care. *Health Aff (Millwood).* 2011; 30(7):1366-74.
- Johnson D, Saavedra P, Sun E, Stageman A, Grovet D, Alfero C, et al. Community health workers and Medicaid managed care in New Mexico. *J Community Health.* 2012; 37(3):563-71.

CHWs provided community-based peer support to Medicaid managed care enrollees who were frequent users of healthcare. Hospitalizations, ER use, and prescriptions were reduced when the CHWs provided education and social support.

- Rush CH. Return on investment from employment of community health workers. *J Ambul Care Manage.* 2012; 35(2):133-7.