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CONNECTICUT  
HEALTHCARE  
INNOVATION PLAN



## **Community Health Worker Advisory Committee**

Recommendations- As of  
March 3, 2017

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# Definition

- “A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a front line public health worker who is a trusted member of, and/or has a unique understanding of the experience, language, culture, and socioeconomic needs of the community served. A CHW serves as a liaison/intermediary between individuals, communities and health and social services to facilitate access to care, improve the quality and cultural responsiveness of service delivery, and address social determinants of health.
- CHWs build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of culturally appropriate services such as: outreach and engagement; education, coaching, and informal counseling; social support; advocacy; care coordination; basic screenings and assessments; and research and evaluation.”

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# Scope of Work

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- See Separate Document “CHW Advisory Committee Recommended Roles and Skills”

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# Certification

# CHW Certification Principles

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The ideal Certification process for CHWs:

- Ensures individual CHWs have achieved core competencies
- Develops a sense of professionalism amongst CHWs
- Can be recognized by employers or payers
- Does not prohibit experienced CHWs from continuing their work
- Does not hold CHWs to unfair standards
- Is not cost-prohibitive for CHWs
- Empowers CHWs to control their own future

# CHW Certification Recommendation- Key Elements

The CHW Certification Design Group recommends that DPH establish a CHW certification program. Under this program CHWs will receive an individual 24-month certification from DPH and be placed on a CHW registry if they complete a) an approved training program and b) pass a standardized competency-based assessment.

Key Elements are as follows:

- DPH shall designate CHW training programs as “DPH approved”, based on a standardized curriculum review conducted by agency staff or a contractor.
- DPH shall establish a standardized competency assessment process that assesses both skills and knowledge by June 30, 2018. DPH shall ensure the assessment is reasonably accessible to individuals with language barriers and appropriately assesses cultural competency.
- The standardized competency assessment shall be administered by one or more DPH approved entities.
- DPH shall issue individual certifications to CHWs who have completed an approved training program AND demonstrated proficiency through the standardized competency assessment.



# CHW Certification Recommendation- Grand-fathering

- DPH shall allow for grand-fathering: For the first two years, DPH shall issue certifications to CHWs who demonstrate knowledge of the core competencies and experience of the CHW field based on either a) completion of a designated number of hours as a CHW and recommendations from current or previous employers or b) passing the standardized competency-based assessment.
- DPH shall assess and determine the need for a pathway to certification based on CHW experience beyond the initial two-year grand-fathering period. Such a process may require completion of a designated number of hours as a CHW, recommendations from current or previous employers, and passing the standardized competency-based assessment.
- Certification shall be voluntary.

# CHW Certification Recommendation- Re-Certification and Registry

- Certification shall be granted for 24 months. Re-certification will require evidence of the completion of continuing education hours and evidence of experience providing CHW services, either through employment or volunteer work as a Community Health Worker in the past 24 months.
- The continuing education and experience verification process shall be administered by DPH or its contractor.
- DPH shall establish a Certified CHW registry listing all of the individuals who have ever received certification and the status of such certification. The purpose of the registry is to enable employers to identify certified CHWs and to screen out individuals who may have lost certification for reasons of misconduct

# CHW Certification Recommendation- Additional Recommendations

- DPH shall be established as the CHW certification authority under statute. Such statute shall designate a Certified CHW as one who has received an individual certification from DPH. Only CHWs who have received this certification may use the title “Certified CHW”
- DPH shall use the definition and scope of practice developed by the CHW Advisory Committee (based on the National C3 Recommendations for Community Health Workers) as the basis for developing curriculum standards.
- DPH shall establish a CHW Advisory Committee to advise it on development of the training program and competency assessment standards and corresponding certification procedures. At least 50% of the seats on the Advisory Committee should be reserved for CHWs from a range of backgrounds. The Advisory Committee shall also include representatives of DSS, DMHAS, CHWACT, CHW employers, a CHW training program, and a commercial payer.