

CONNECTICUT
HEALTHCARE
INNOVATION PLAN



**Community Health
Worker Advisory
Committee- Certification
Design Group**

December 15, 2016

- Review and Updates from our last meeting
- Review of Certifying Entity Options
- Discussion- The goals of the CHW Initiative and ways to get there
- Discussion- How can certification help to achieve our goals?
- Discussion- Which Key Informants do we need and what information do we need from them?

DPH Involvement in the Certification Process

- Pros of DPH Involvement: Gives CHWs stature, has existing infrastructure for certification process including a process for a registry
- Cons: Bureaucracy can slow down the process, will require some sort of legislation which can be difficult to pass or alter at later points, requires state funding
- Comment: Stature is the only real reason to use DPH as the certifying entity

Considerations for Other Certifying Entities

- If a private organization maintains the certification, how will the CHWs have a say? Will there be a board and how will it be determined who sits on it? If a private organization serves as the certifying entity, there will probably need to be a grant which seems counter to the purpose of the CHW sustainability work we are doing
- Creating a new entity to run certification seems daunting

- We need an entity that can work WITH CHWs and support and understand how CHWs work. We already know what we can expect from DPH. CHWs should be empowered to guide their own future.
- Any certification process will require funding, and there are two basic options- 1. Ask the legislature for money, or 2) Ask another organization for money.
- Community Colleges already have a pipeline through CHW certificates that earn college credit and lead into other degree programs
- Training- There should be core competencies and a review to check for quality of delivery of the core competencies. This should be an ongoing process- not just a one-time approval.

Proposal:

Designate the CHW Association as the certifying entity for CHW Training Programs. The CHW Association will adopt Training Program requirements as determined by the recommendations of the CHW Advisory Committee in collaboration with a CHW Association Board. The CHW Association will review CT Training Programs against the adopted requirements every two years. CHWs that complete training from approved programs will be considered Certified CHWs.

Connecticut Certification Board

- Oversees 13 Certifications
- Average cost to the applicant is ~\$275 exam and ~\$300 for 2-year certification
- DHMAS funds about 1/3 of the organization through a stipend
- There is a procedure to investigate ethical issues based on code of ethics
- The main reason behind certification is public protection
- Subject Matter Experts develop the competencies, most are exam based

Certifying Entity- Options

	Option	1	2	3	
	Certifying entity	DPH	CHW Association	CT Certification Board	What would help?
	Criteria				
1	Stature: acceptance by payers and employers	Yes	?	Yes	Register with DPH, Est. disciplinary process
2	Existing infrastructure	Yes	No	Yes	
3	Flexibility to make changes later	Less	Yes	Yes	Establish broad requirements
4	Empowerment of CHWs to make decisions	Less	Yes	Less	Establish a board with a majority of CHWs
5	Source of funding	Appropriation and Fees	Volunteers and Fees	Fees	Grant funding to support process
6	Cost to implement	Higher	Lower	Higher	Grant funding to support process
7	Accountability	to legislature	to CHWs	to CCB board (which may include CHWs)	
8	Biggest hurdle	Passing legislation	Developing infrastructure	New, unfamiliar entity	
9	Timeframe to implement	Depends on legislation	Depends on ability to rally CHWs	Depends on funding, development of test	Deadlines, facilitator
10	Likelihood of success	May be difficult with current budget	May be difficult to develop infrastructure	Could be high, but would depend on fees	

Our goal is to integrate Community Health Workers fully as valuable members of the Care Team in a sustainable way. While we have discussed other objectives, two important objectives are:

1. Achieving **Stature** for the Community Health Worker Profession
2. Ensuring **sustainable funding for** Community Health Workers

What are the current issues facing CHWs?

- Not valued as members of the Care Team
- Employers don't understand CHW roles
- CHWs do not feel respected

What is our desired outcome?

- CHWs represent a thriving professional group
- CHW roles are well understood by employers and potential employers
- CHWs are valued as members of the care team

- Educate employers and care teams on the roles of CHWs
- Provide technical assistance to employers attempting to integrate CHWs
- Demonstrate ROI for CHW programs and replicate
- Build up the CHW Association to give a voice to the CHW community
- Ensure CHW representation on multi-stakeholder boards
- Establish Certification

In what other ways can we achieve stature for CHWs?

Does certification address the issues currently faced by CHWs in terms of value and respect?

How are CHWs paid now?

- Grant funding
- In some states, under specific Medicaid Fee For Service arrangements

What are options for sustainable funding?

- Fee-for-service arrangements through Medicaid or commercial payers
- Comprehensive Payments that include CHWs as part of the care team

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of CHWs as part of health care teams through programs like CCIP
- Require CHWs as part of care teams in payer or state contracts
- Demonstrate CHW ROI, especially for specific programs like diabetes prevention
- Pilot a new Primary Care Payment Model that includes CHWs

Why aren't payers currently funding CHWs?

Why aren't employers currently staffing CHWs?

Will certification lead to sustainable funding? Will certification lead to more employers hiring CHWs?

Suggested Key Informants

- DPH/DMHAS Administrators of Certification Programs (ie Home Health Aides, Medical Assistants, Recovery Support Specialists)
- CT Certification Board
- Employers of Other Certified Professions, like those listed above
- Additional Community Health Workers
- Additional Employers of Community Health Workers

Who else do we need to speak with?

- How have other health care providers (Medical Assistants, etc.) gained entry into the healthcare system and become a typical member of the healthcare team?
- What are the total costs to consider for a certification process (including costs from individuals, the state, and grant funding)?
- Has certification helped achieve stature for the profession? What else has helped achieve stature?
- Certifying training programs vs. certifying individuals- Cost, time, benefits to practice