Finding Answers:
Disparities Research for Change

Community Health Workers

Key Components of Successful Community Health Worker Programs

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A National Program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at the University of Chicago

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Recruitment and Retention

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Community Health Workers

- "Community members who serve as connectors between health care consumers and providers to promote health among groups that have traditionally lacked access to health care."

Witmer et al, AJPH 1995

Key Distinctive Characteristics

- Individuals from target community (culturally/ ethnically/ linguistically)
- Carry out functions related to health care
- Trained in the context of an intervention
- Have no formal or paraprofessional health care degree

Roles of CHWs

- Improve access-promote programs/services
- Provide culturally appropriate education/ information
- Improve behavioral outcomes
- Act as advocate/mediator between providers and client
- Provide social support

Recruitment

- How to find CHW?
  - Community-based organizations
  - Local health care clinics/providers
  - Local support groups/education classes
  - Newsletters of social/community organizations
  - Key informants in community

Characteristics of Successful CHW

- Motivation--desire to help others/self
- High self-esteem resulting in credibility
- Trustworthiness/confidentiality
- Maturity/responsibility
- Good interpersonal skills
- Literacy (not necessarily bilingual)
- Experience with disease/condition

Retention of CHW

- Availability to do the work (full vs. part time)
- Commitment to the duration of program
- Documentation situation
- Transportation
- Family's attitude toward role of CHW
- Cohesiveness of "team" membership

Training/Curriculum/Supervision

Massachusetts League
of Community Health Centers

University of Massachusetts Medical School

How do we match the curriculum to the CHW role?

- Partnered with the Outreach Worker Training Institute
  - Five years of experience
  - Taught by professional instructors and experienced CHWs
  - CHW generalist curriculum modified to diabetic specialist

Designing the Job Description

- Self management goal setting
- Review of existing CHW roles
- Performance expectations
- Guidance in hiring process

Training

45-hour Community Health Worker certificate course modified to include diabetes self management

- 15 sessions (three hours per session)
- 8 core competency sessions
- 7 diabetes components

Eight Core Competencies

- Service coordination
- Interpersonal
- Communication and interviewing
- Organizational
- Presentation and facilitation
- Individual and community assessment
- Advocacy and leadership
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity

Self Management Goal Setting

- Theme woven throughout curriculum
- Patient directed
- Stages of Change
- Motivational Interviewing
- Realistic goal setting
- Role playing exercises
- Documentation (encounter form)

Supervision

- Why is it important?
  - Burnout
  - Boundaries
- Who should be involved?
  - Clinical versus Social Service
- What should it include?

Training of Supervisors

- 6 hour supervisor training
  - Role of CHW
  - Boundaries
    - Dual relationships
    - Self-disclosure
  - Role creep
    - Previous/current position at CHC
  - Deployment
    - Integration strategies
    - Communication

Ongoing training

- CHWs
  - Scheduled conference calls
  - Workshops- Developed based upon continuous needs assessment
- Supervisors
  - Scheduled conference calls
  - Workshops- Developed based upon continuous needs assessment

What do supervisors need?

- Pre-implementation support
- Ongoing support and technical assistance
- Peer-to-Peer contact (networking opportunities

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“THANKS FOR THIS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DIABETES IN GENERAL AND ALSO THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH COLLEAGUES WORKING ON THE SAME FIELD.

HEALTHY PEOPLE MAKE A STRONG COMMUNITY.”

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Quality and Financing

Scott Cook, Ph.D.
University of Chicago

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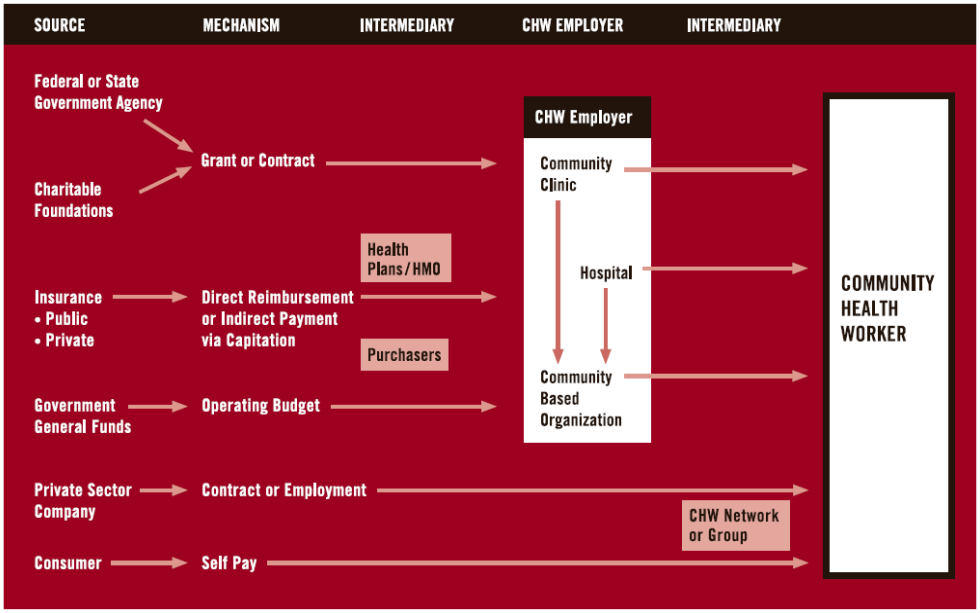
Performance Evaluation

- Supervisor
  - Observation
  - Task / procedure documentation
  - Supervision meetings
- Patient/client
- Medical/Behavioral Health
- Other CHW

Documentation

- Standardized policies and procedures
  - Supervisor review
  - Supervision notes
- Keeping up
- Separate records
- Outcome data
  - Health
  - Behavior

Program Funding



Dower, Knox, Lindler & O'Neil 2006

Vulnerable to Exploitation

- Mostly women without college or professional education
- Often foreign-born and/or living in underserved communities
- Not represented by unions or subject to regulation or oversight by regulatory boards
- No national association or network / only a few state associations