

Center for Health Workforce Research and Policy
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Community Health Workers: the basics

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What's your definition of CHW?



Community Health Worker Definition

American Public Health Association (I)

- ❑ The CHW is a frontline public 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.

Community Health Worker Definition - APHA (2)

- ❑ The 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.**

❑ APHA Policy Statement 2009-1, November 2009

What Is Distinctive About CHWs? (I)

- ❑ Do not provide clinical care
- ❑ Generally do not hold another professional license
- ❑ Expertise is based on *shared life experience* (and often *culture*) with people served

What Is Distinctive About CHWs? (2)

- ❑ Rely on *relationships and trust* more than on clinical expertise
- ❑ Relate to community members *as peers rather than purely as clients*
- ❑ Can achieve certain results that other professionals can't






Current national CHW initiatives (I)

- ❑ CDC CHW policy e-learning series
- ❑ OWH CHW leadership training
- ❑ DOL “apprenticeable trade”
- ❑ OMH Promotora/CHW initiative
- ❑ DOL occupational definition

CHW Policy Activity by State

LEGEND

-  Formal policy process initiated/proposed
-  Statewide coalition/working group organized
-  Initial investigations conducted by State govt.

