



Community Health Worker Integration Resource Guide

Background

Many primary care practices are working to integrate Community Health Workers (CHWs) into their teams to assist in providing comprehensive care support and improving health equity in their communities. CHWs offer a valuable skill set that equips them to assist in care coordination, particularly for underserved populations that face cultural and linguistic barriers to care. Drawing from shared life experiences with the community, CHWs serve as a link between the health system and the community. CHWs can help a patient translate what they learned at their primary care visit to their reality at home.

Benefits of CHW Integration¹⁻⁵

- Improved access to health care services
- Improved adherence to health recommendations
- Increased health screening
- Reduced need for emergency and speciality services
- Better understanding between community members and health and social service system

MDPCP Requirements

CHWs can take on many different roles depending on the needs of your practice and the surrounding community. MDPCP practices can utilize CHWs to ensure that they are meeting the care transformation requirements for their respective tracks. Examples of CHW roles as they apply to each of the five Comprehensive Primary Care Functions of Advanced Primary Care include:

Function	Role	Example
Access and Continuity	Direct link between patient and care team (continuity), increased access to alternate care settings	Coordinate and attend home visits
Care Management	Provide personalized and culturally appropriate health promotion/education	Provide Spanish written materials and verbal explanations of diabetes treatment plan to Spanish speaking patients
Comprehensiveness and Coordination	Assist in gaining access to nonmedical services	Help connect patients to housing agencies and unemployment resources
Beneficiary and Caregiver Experience	Relate to patients with shared lived experience and assist patients in taking charge of their own health	Facilitate discussions at Patient-Family/Caregiver Advisory Councils (PFAC)
Planned Care for Health Outcomes	Conduct practice/community needs assessment	Perform qualitative assessment of social needs to influence practice policies/workflows

Three Ways to Engage with CHWs in your Practice:



Checklist

The checklist below provides a framework that can be used to integrate CHWs into your practice. (Adapted from [CDC CHW Integration Checklist](#))

Action Item	Checkbox
Decide on the “Community”	
Determine the “community” from which you will recruit CHWs based on your patient unique population	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess the Landscape	
Gain a high-level understanding of best practices related to the implementation of CHWs in the primary care setting <ul style="list-style-type: none">Best Practice Guidelines for Implementing and Evaluating Community Health Worker Programs in Health Care Settings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learn about laws or policies pertaining to CHWs (core competencies, scope of practice, certification, financing, HIPAA) <ul style="list-style-type: none">State Law Fact Sheet: A Summary of State Community Health Worker LawsMaryland CHW Certification Training Program Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine Reasons for Integrating CHWs into your practice	
Identify the priorities and needs of your unique beneficiary population	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use CRISP to target beneficiaries for engagement with CHWs (consider engaging HEART beneficiaries)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify Key Stakeholders	
Identify community based organizations who would be integral to your CHW program <ul style="list-style-type: none">211 Resource DirectoryFindHelp Resource Directory	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify an individual to oversee the inclusion of CHWs into the practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage Key Stakeholders to Develop Goals and Objectives	
Educate the staff within the practice about the role(s) the CHWs will have	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine what resources are needed to develop the CHW program at your practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure all stakeholders including staff and CHWs (if possible) are able to develop the objectives and goals of CHW integration into your practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use Frameworks and Models to Implement Your CHW Program	

Understand example models of CHW integration used elsewhere (see this resource starting on page 9 as a starting point) and design a model that is focused on the needs of your community	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate Inclusion of CHWs into Health Care Setting	
Formal Agreements	
Create a formal agreement detailing the roles and protocol for CHWs and other involved staff/community members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an advisory group (including practice staff, CHWs and key stakeholder liaisons) to ensure engagement of CHWs in development and implementation of CHW integration in your practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scope of Practice	
Explain the role and responsibilities of CHWs to all team members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be sure that the responsibilities and roles of CHWs allows for them to build relationships with the community and patients	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add CHWs to team huddles and other regular check-ins on patient panel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervision	
Identify somebody to be a CHW supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify resources and training specifically for overseeing CHWs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold regular meetings with CHWs and supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trainings	
Identify the costs associated with training CHWs and CHW supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine the availability and level of interest of your practice's CHWs and CHW supervisors to participate in external trainings, needed certifications and other enrichment opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic Health Records	
Be sure that CHWs are able to access and use electronic health records	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine to what extent CHWs will be able to view and add to the health record	<input type="checkbox"/>

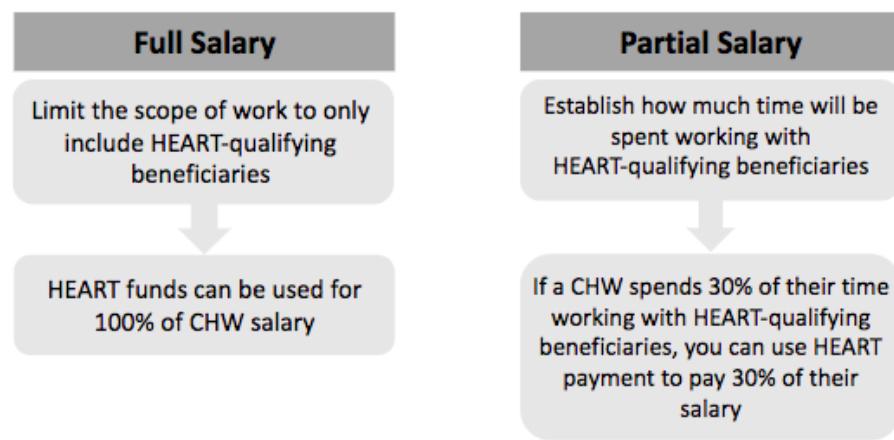
MDH Accredited CHW Training Programs:

Here is a [link](#) to the list of accredited Community Health Worker Training Programs in Maryland including their contact information.

Funding Opportunities

Your practice or CTO may consider using HEART funds for staffing purposes, such as hiring a Community Health Worker to work with HEART-qualifying beneficiaries. If you are using HEART funds for staffing, you must either limit the staff to only work with HEART-qualifying beneficiaries, or you may use HEART payments to pay for only the portion of time staff works with HEART-qualifying beneficiaries.

For example, if your practice hires a Community Health Worker who spends 30% of her time working with HEART-qualifying beneficiaries, you can use your HEART payment to pay 30% of her salary.



Additional resources

- CDC Community Health Worker [Toolkit](#) and [integration checklist](#)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation guide on [Integrating Community Health Workers into Health Care Teams](#)
- [Integrating Community Health Workers into Primary Care Practice: A Resource Guide for HCH Programs](#)
- [Best Practice Guidelines for Implementing and Evaluating Community Health Worker Programs in Health Care Settings](#)
- [State Law Fact Sheet: A Summary of State Community Health Worker Laws](#)

References:

1. Allen, C. G., Barbero, C., Shantharam, S., & Moeti, R. (2019). Is theory guiding our work? A scoping review on the use of implementation theories, frameworks, and models to bring community health workers into health care settings. *Journal of public health management and practice: JPHMP*, 25(6), 571.
2. Kangovi, S., Grande, D., Carter, T., Barg, F. K., Rogers, M., Glanz, K., Shannon, R., & Long, J. A. (2014). The use of participatory action research to design a patient-centered community health worker care transitions intervention. *Healthcare (Amsterdam, Netherlands)*, 2(2), 136–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hjdsi.2014.02.001>
3. Cherrington, A., Ayala, G. X., Amick, H., Allison, J., Corbie-Smith, G., & Scarinci, I. (2008). Implementing the community health worker model within diabetes management. *The Diabetes Educator*, 34(5), 824-833.
4. Findley, S., Matos, S., Hicks, A., Chang, J., & Reich, D. (2014). Community health worker integration into the health care team accomplishes the triple aim in a patient-centered medical home: a Bronx tale. *The Journal of ambulatory care management*, 37(1), 82-91.
5. Morgan, A. U., Grande, D. T., Carter, T., Long, J. A., & Kangovi, S. (2016). Penn Center for Community Health Workers: Step-by-Step Approach to Sustain an Evidence-Based Community Health Worker Intervention at an Academic Medical Center. *American journal of public health*, 106(11), 1958–1960. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303366>