

Community Health Workers to Help Improve Diabetes Self-Management

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INTRODUCTION

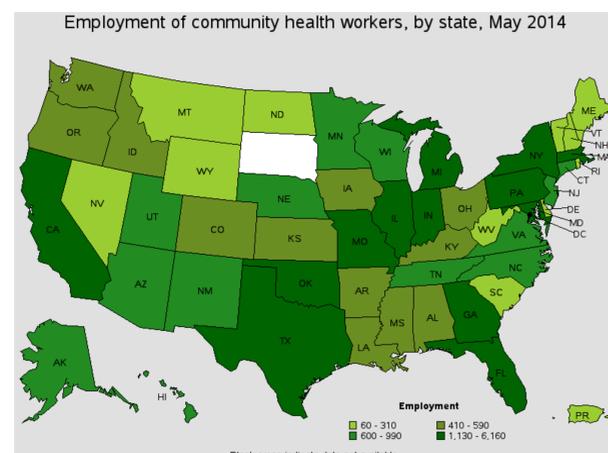
Community Health Workers (CHW) are lay members of communities who work either for pay or as volunteers in association with the local health care system in both urban and rural environments. These unique individuals usually share ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status and life experiences with the community members they serve. They have been identified by many titles.

CHWs provide and assist individuals and communities in adopting healthy behaviors. They conduct outreach for health and social organizations. They implement, promote, maintain, and improve individual and community health.

- In California, CHWs effectively address diabetes prevention, diet and cardiovascular health.
- In Arkansas, CHWs have been effective in addressing health spending in chronic disease management.

In this century, evidence is growing that CHWs contribute to improved health outcomes, and reduce emergency room visits.

Since 2000, the Community Health Worker profession has grown in so many ways. The field has become embedded in the healthcare field and a common definition was established by the American Public Health Association in 2007. Today, there is a Standard Occupational Classification (21-1094) for the Community Health Worker profession.

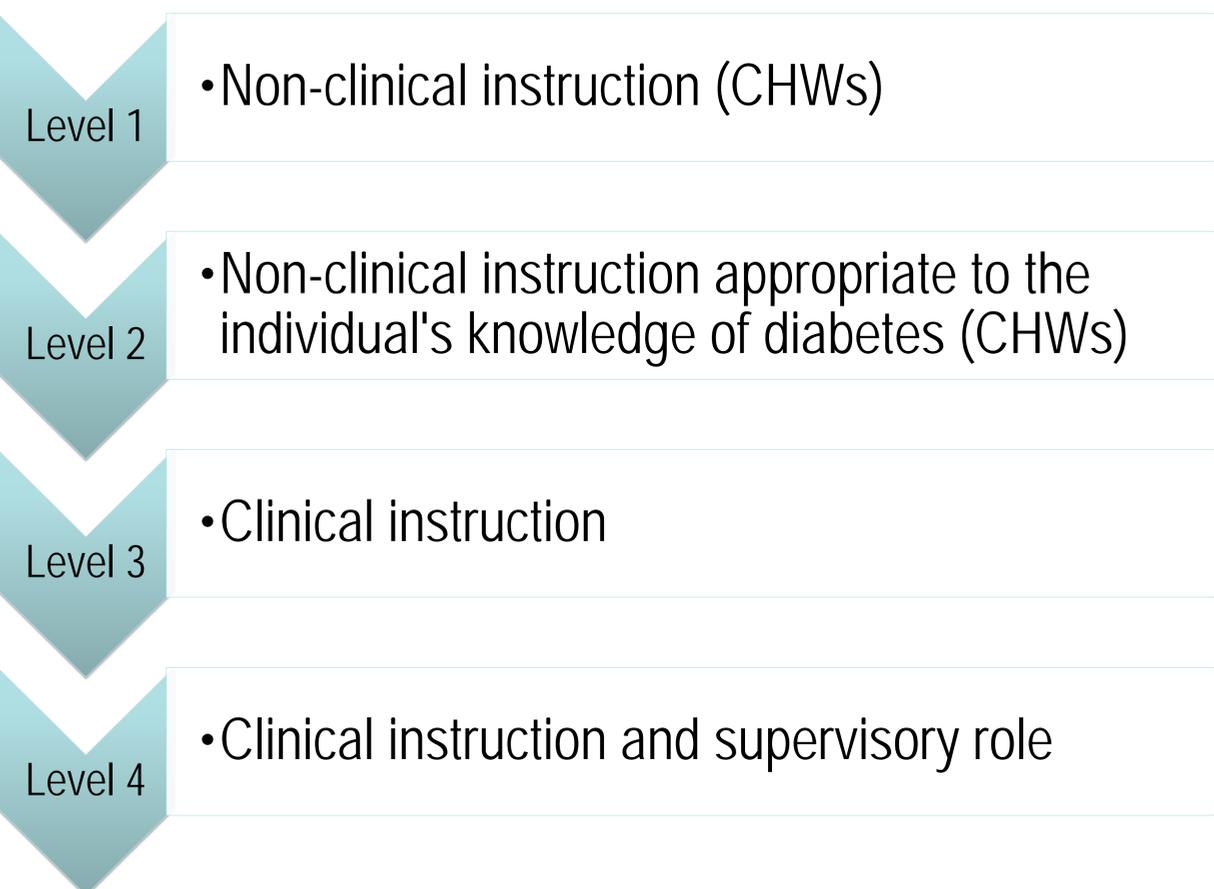


Diabetes Self Management and Education (DSME)

CHWs provide outreach education, culturally competent health education on chronic disease management, and advocate for the communities they serve. Additionally, they provide basic case-management, informal counseling, and guidance. There is growing evidence that the CHW model is one of the most effective models to address chronic health conditions, especially one as prevalent as diabetes.

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S.; over 29 million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with diabetes and approximately 86 million have prediabetes. The ability to meet the need of educating these populations is being tested as the number of people diagnosed with diabetes continues to grow. While educating diabetic patients has historically been provided by those with professional licenses, CHWs can collaborate with medical teams to provide outreach more effectively.

The Multi-Level Diabetes Education Approach includes several credentialed or advance degreed professionals along with CHWs to provide patient-focused care. With quality design, clear goals, supervision, and continued education on the subject matter, CHWs can increase access to services.



Multi-Level Diabetes Education

As the U.S. healthcare delivery system shifts its focus to community-based health and community health outcomes, CHWs can encourage communities to prevent diabetes and other chronic diseases, help communities identify complications from diabetes in its early stages, and link hard-to-reach communities to quality health and social services to manage their health conditions.

The ideal diabetes education team has more than one educator and offers a patient-focused approach to diabetes self-management.

With quality design, clear goals, supervision, and continued education, CHWs can help increase access to services.

CHWs are non-diabetes educators who are non-healthcare professionals uniquely positioned to collaborate with diabetes educators and other providers to improve the quality of education, care, and prevention in communities.

CHWs bridge the gap between the community and the healthcare system.



RESOURCES

FUNDING CHW'S – MAIN SOURCES		
MEDICAID	COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER RESOURCES	SIM Funding
1115 Waiver Projects		Accountable Care Organizations
MCD'S		Health Homes
Private Grants		PCMH
		Community Health Teams

Visit the Texas CHW Advisory Committee for a description of the competencies, approval process, and forms:

www.dshs.state.tx.us/chpr/chw/default.shtm