

Including Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Health Care Settings

A Checklist for Public Health Practitioners

This checklist presents a general framework for public health practitioners to lead or assist in including CHWs and integrating the CHW scope of practice in health care settings. This is reflected in four phases: **Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Sustainability**. It is designed to be a conversation facilitator and nonprescriptive tool to help to establish and strengthen relationships between CHWs and health care providers, as well as provide direction for public health practitioners. However, it is not designed to be a comprehensive guide to implementing CHW-based health care interventions, nor does it address the nuances of incorporating CHWs in the day-to-day activities of a health care setting.

NOTE: Although these phases are presented in a linear fashion, in practice, they build on each other in an interdependent manner and might be addressed in nonlinear ways. Each phase in the checklist is designed to be completed individually or in its entirety.

Visit www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/toolkits/chw-checklist.htm for a list of resources to help carry out the potential action steps listed.

For more information and resources related to CHWs, visit the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/ or contact AREBheartinfo@cdc.gov.



PLAN the Inclusion of CHWs into Health Care Settings

Potential Action Step	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Decide on the "Community"	
1. Determine the "community" from which you will recruit CHWs, draw program participants (e.g., hypertensive patients), and identify community organizations with whom to partner.	
Assess the Landscape	
2. Gain a high-level understanding of best or promising practices related to including CHWs in health care settings.	
3. Identify the extent to which community members understand CHWs' potential roles and contributions to patient outcomes.	
4. Identify how health care providers understand CHWs' potential roles and contributions to patient outcomes.	
5. Learn about laws or policies about CHWs that influence their inclusion in health care settings (e.g., core competencies, scope of practice, certification, financing, HIPAA).	
6. Explore previous and existing efforts that included CHWs in health care settings.	
Determine Reasons for Integrating CHWs in Health Care Settings	
7. Identify the priorities and needs of the community and health care setting.	
8. Identify which priorities and needs CHWs could address using their competencies.	
Identify Key Stakeholders	
9. Identify key stakeholders who would be integral to your CHW program (e.g., CHWs, community organizations, program participants, health care managers).	
10. Identify the ways in which you will engage key stakeholders (e.g., CHW Advisory Groups, town hall meetings, in-person briefings, newsletters).	
11. Identify a champion who could facilitate the inclusion of CHWs.	
Engage Key Stakeholders to Develop Goals and Objectives	
12. Obtain buy-in from multiple layers of the health care setting (e.g., frontline staff, administrators, payers, supervisors, chief officers, nonmanagement employees, social workers, nurses) to educate them about CHWs.	
13. Develop tools (e.g., a timeline, a protocol) to plan your CHW program.	
14. Use approaches that take into account perceived or real power differentials (e.g., CHWs vs. nurse practitioners), so that different voices are heard when developing goals and objectives.	
15. Ensure your goals and objectives include a program evaluation plan.	
16. Ensure your goals and objectives include a program sustainability plan.	



IMPLEMENT Your CHW Programs

Potential Action Step		✓
Use Frameworks and Models to Implement Your CHW Program		
17. Consider using models that would allow for program adaptation and tailoring to the community context.		
18. Identify factors that are likely to lead to success.		
Facilitate Inclusion of CHWs into Health Care Settings		
Formal Agreements		
19. Develop a formal agreement for involved parties that outlines roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols.		
20. Develop a formal mechanism (e.g., a CHW Advisory Group) to meaningfully engage CHWs during implementation.		
Scope of Practice		
21. Clarify the scope(s) of practice of CHWs and everyone on the team.		
22. Ensure the CHW scope of practice maintains the CHW's connection to the community.		
23. Ensure the CHWs are performing the duties that allow them to build trusting relationships with patients.		
24. Ensure the CHW scope of practice adheres to federal and state laws (e.g., sharing of medical information).		
Supervision		
25. Identify a person who can relate to CHWs as the CHW supervisor.		
26. Identify supervisor training opportunities specifically related to CHWs.		
27. Schedule regular meetings between CHWs and their supervisors.		
Trainings (Related to Competency)		
28. Identify the ongoing cost in time and money for training CHWs and their supervisors.		
29. Identify the format (e.g., objectives, frequency) and content (e.g., core competencies, professional skills) of trainings and continuing education opportunities.		
30. Assess the availability and interest of your CHWs and their supervisors in attending external training, certification, and educational opportunities.		
Electronic Health Records		
31. Ensure CHWs have access to and use of electronic health records.		
32. Identify at what level CHWs will be allowed to read and contribute to the medical record.		



EVALUATE the Inclusion of CHWs in Health Care Settings

Potential Action Step		✓
Organize and Manage the Evaluation		
33. Consider using evaluations frameworks to structure your program evaluation.		
34. Identify people with evaluation expertise in-house or consider partnering with academic institutions or other organizations.		
35. Consider how your evaluation will inform quality improvement efforts.		
36. Work with key stakeholders to secure access to data sources on costs and outcomes.		
Frame the Evaluation		
37. Discuss the evaluation goals with key stakeholders to identify which evaluation aspects are important to them.		
38. Ensure that the evaluation reflects community-based principles (e.g., examining how CHWs and community members are meaningfully engaged), even if it is located in health care settings.		
39. Ensure the evaluation captures the added unique value of including CHWs into health care settings.		

EVALUATE the Inclusion of CHWs in Health Care Settings *(Continued)*

Potential Action Step		✓
Frame the Evaluation <i>(Continued)</i>		
40. Identify what constitutes a “success” and the related outcomes (e.g., improving patient health, increasing patient satisfaction, reducing costs).		
41. Identify how to use existing systems to track the progress of evaluation outcomes.		
42. Develop a plan to conduct full evaluations on a recurring basis to inform program improvement and ensure program utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy.		
Pilot-Test and Start Off with “Small Successes” Early On		
43. Gather feedback, suggestions for improvement, and success stories from key stakeholders about their experiences with your CHW program.		
44. Identify and address any procedural issues associated with your CHW program.		
45. Prioritize patients who meet criteria to be referred to CHWs and consistently attend medical appointments.		
Conduct a Full Evaluation		
46. Using the results from the pilot test, adjust the evaluation goals and methodology for a comprehensive evaluation.		
47. Execute a formal systematic evaluation of your CHW program.		
48. As with the pilot test, identify and address any procedural issues associated with your CHW program.		
49. Work with people who will help in the referral process to ensure easy transitions.		
50. As with the pilot test, identify and prioritize patients who could be referred to CHWs.		
Share Evaluation Results		
51. Share the evaluation results with different audiences in the most appropriate format (e.g., national CHW associations, other state health departments, federal agencies).		



SUSTAIN Your CHW Program

Potential Action Step		✓
Consider Financing Mechanisms		
52. Estimate the resources and costs associated with sustaining your CHW program, including properly equipping, supplying, training, and supporting CHWs in your organization.		
53. Identify payment options for CHWs.		
54. Identify reimbursement mechanisms for CHWs’ services (e.g., Medicaid or Medicare, managed care contracting, grants).		
55. Identify reimbursement options through health care facilities that complement and reinforce CHWs being included in team-based health care (e.g., Patient-Centered Medical Homes, Federally Qualified Health Centers, accountable care organizations).		
56. Build partnerships with public and private payers that are looking to engage CHWs and address the social determinants of health in patients.		
57. Engage key stakeholders to advance sustainable financing mechanisms for CHWs.		
58. Engage key stakeholders to deliver intermediate and long-term outcomes in a recurring and timely fashion. These reports may depend on the stakeholder.		
59. Update your organization’s budget tracking process and reports to include costs associated with CHWs, CHW supervisors, and CHW-related infrastructure costs.		