

RESEARCH-BASED COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN GEORGIA



Research-based Community Health Workers (CHWs) help connect academia with the community through coordinated outreach efforts as well as provide education to community members on important health-related information.

Two Sides of Research

1

Gathering Information

CHWs help develop research questions, recruit participants, and design interventions.

2

Disseminating Information

CHWs ensure that results from their research are disseminated to the community such as preventative measures.

"CHW's act as a bridge between our academic institutions, our community partners, and the community. Because we are trusted members of the areas we serve, we know how to engage our neighbors in outreach and interventions most effectively."

Adrienne Proeller, CHW, Morehouse School of Medicine Prevention Research Center

Core CHW Roles

- Cultural Mediation Among Individuals, Communities, and Health and Social Service Systems
- Participating in Evaluation and Research
- Implementing Individual and Community Assessments

Impact of CHW Research Involvement

→ Increasing Access to Healthy Foods in Atlanta, GA

CHWs helped to implement and evaluate the Health Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) which helped to increase community buy-in to healthy food offerings.

→ Reducing ED Visits at Grady Memorial Hospital

CHWs helped to navigate patients from the ED to a newly created primary clinic in close proximity.

→ Connecting Atlanta Housing Program Residents with Permanent Medical Care

CHWs partnered with the Atlanta Housing Authority and employment agencies to help secure permanent medical care.



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Georgia CHW Network

MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE | Office of Community Engagement
Research, Practice, and Education

The Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority
Center of Grady Health System

GEORGIA CEAL



RURAL-BASED COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN GEORGIA



Rural-Based Community Health Workers (CHWs) play a critical role in connecting communities with limited access to medical care to free and low-cost services. They also help reduce barriers by coordinating transportation services for clients.

Core CHW Roles

- Providing Direct Services
- Care Coordination, Case Management, and System Navigation
- Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education and Information

Barriers to Healthcare in Rural Georgia

- 38% of rural Georgians are uninsured and low-income
- 8 rural hospitals have closed in the past decade
- Rural Georgians may have to travel over 50 miles to reach their nearest hospital

Impact of Rural CHWs

- Provide health screenings and referrals
- Coordinate transportation to health clinics and providers
- Assist in applying for insurance
- Connect residents to free or lower-cost care opportunities

"Rural counties do not have the same resources as metro counties which can create barriers to accessing resources. As CHWs, we often rely on small, close knit networks to meet the needs of the community."

Lanona Jones
Chair, CPNA., Inc.
Lagrange, GA



CHWs play a vital role in connecting the 76,000 Georgians caught in the "coverage gap" to essential resources



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METRO ATLANTA-BASED COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS



Metro Atlanta-Based Community Health Workers (CHWs) work with residents in the Metro Atlanta area to meet their specific health and social needs.

Health Disparities in Metro Atlanta

- 12 year+ life expectancy difference between zip codes in Fulton County
- Recent closure of Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center which served low-income communities
- Over 500,000 residents in metro Atlanta live in food deserts

"Community Health Workers have a vested interest in the overall health of the community; not just physical health, but also mental, spiritual, and everything else that encompasses a person's well-being."

Christine Wiggins
VP of Community Health Systems
Fulton-Dekalb Hospital Authority

Core CHW Roles

- Providing Direct Services
- Care Coordination, Case Management, and System Navigation
- Providing Coaching and Social Support

Impact of CHWs in Metro Atlanta

- **Filling in the Gaps**
 CHWs help to bridge the gap between communities, social services, and health care systems to improve delivery of care and increase access to services.
- **Addressing Food Insecurity**
 CHWs helped to increase access to healthy foods in Atlanta, particularly in food deserts through the Health Corner Store Initiative (HCSI).
- **Increase Access to Care**
 CHWs help to increase access to primary medical care to reduce ED visits and unstable healthcare access in communities.



THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN GEORGIA



WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER (CHW)?

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served.

TYPES OF CHWs IN GEORGIA

- Rural-based
- Research-based
- Immigrant/Refugee
- Retail-based
- Metro Atlanta based
- And more!

COMMON TITLES FOR CHWs

- Peer Educators
- Promotoras de Salud
- Peer Health Promoters
- Patient Navigator
- Lay Health Advocates
- And more!

CORE CHW ROLES & IMPACT

Cultural mediation among individuals, communities, and health and social service systems



Increased cultural competence and awareness in healthcare

Care coordination, case management, and system navigation
Serving as a the bridge between community members, healthcare providers, and state/local programs.



Better access to appropriate primary care, behavioral health & preventative services

Advocating for individuals and communities
Addressing root causes of poor health, from housing to unemployment to food insecurity



Improved quality of care
Increased health knowledge and self-sufficiency in communities



IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS



Immigrant/Refugee Community Health Workers (CHWs), also commonly known as Promotoras de Salud in Spanish-speaking communities, help provide culturally appropriate services to diverse populations.

Immigrant/Refugee populations in Georgia



"CHWs have a prodigious impact in immigrant populations and refugee communities by advancing a vital role in helping them gain adequate access to healthcare resources and corresponding social services through culturally connected approaches."

Mutima Jackson-Anderson, MPA, CHW President/CEO, Ruby A. Neeson Diabetes Awareness Foundation

Core CHW Roles

- Cultural Mediation Among Individuals, Communities, and Health and Social Service Systems
- Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education and Information
- Building Individual and Community Capacity

Impact of Immigrant/Refugee CHWs

→ **Preventative Care Initiatives**
CHWs preventative care initiatives have included: culturally competent diabetes education, education on HPV vaccinations in rural southern Georgia.

→ **Medical Interpretation**
CHWs helps patients navigate language barriers within the healthcare system by serving as translators.

→ **Case Management & Outreach**
CHWs provide refugee health case management for complex medical issues and assist refugees during visits to the doctor, hospital, dentist, etc.



RETAIL-BASED COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS



Retail-Based Community Health Workers (CHWs) serve a unique role providing access to low cost health services and referrals to Georgians through Retail Clinics.

Retail Clinics, such as Minute Clinics, are walk-in clinics located outside of the traditional healthcare setting.

Retail Health Providers in GA

- Walmart Health
- CVS
- Walgreens
- Kroger

"CHWs are storytellers translating the lived experience of those they serve into lessons that can be used to improve the health of all communities."

Amber Mullen, CHW
Walmart Health

Core CHW Roles

- Providing Direct Service
- Care Coordination, Case Management, and System Navigation
- Conducting Outreach

Impact of Retail CHWs

- **Speciality Provider Referrals**
CHWs help connect community members with specialty provider via referrals, particularly among elderly populations, such as cardiologists, neurologists, and gastroenterologists.
- **Easily Accessible Locations**
Retail locations are spread throughout the state to help increase accessibility to populations that may otherwise have limited access to essential health services.
- **Increased Healthcare Access**
Retail CHWs provide a unique affordable option for health services such as medical, optometry, behavioral health, dental, and more.



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