



# Latino Coalition for a Healthy California “Charla de Promotoras”

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# PROMOTOR@S

## Community Health Workers (CHW's)

- Build on their existing community relationships
- Perform a variety of roles and perform various tasks
- Link people to health or support services
- Coordinate their relationship with multiple service systems



- Umbrella term to describe non-clinical workers who are recruited for their ability to connect to their communities
- Provide leadership through understanding of the communities where they work
- Speak the language of the people they work with



- Recognizing and integrating culturally appropriate approach to health
- Provide cultural mediation to facilitate access to health resources for groups that have traditionally lacked access to adequate health care

# Promotor@s Programs

- Need for constant training and education
- Certification and credentialing programs
  - Enhance the legitimacy of promotor@s
  - Improve outcomes related to services rendered
  - Increase their self-development
  - Expand job opportunities
- In California 5 community colleges offer the Promotor@ certification
- Texas has instituted a statewide credentialing program (160hrs) & salaried promotor@s need to be certified

# Health care reform

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act includes several sections that recognize the key role of community health workers in achieving important goals of health care reform.

# Promotor@s & health care reform

- The umbrella term “community health workers” refers to people alternatively known as outreach workers, *promotores(as) de salud*, community health representatives, and patient navigators.
- In 2009, the U.S. Department of Labor recommended the creation of a Standard Occupational Classification for community health workers, which was subsequently included in a provision of the 2010 landmark national health reform law.

*The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act emphasizes community-based preventive and wellness care and the use of community-based health teams and patient-centered medical homes.*

# Health care reform law

- Recognizes the role of CHWs in achieving the goal of improving health outcomes and containing costs.
- CHWs are explicitly cited in the law as an important part of the care team for delivery system reform. Specifically, the law authorizes funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for CHWs to help promote positive health behaviors and outcomes for populations in medically underserved communities.
- The law also authorizes Area Health Education Centers to conduct interdisciplinary training for community health workers as part of the professional development of health care workers.

# Health care reform...

- Community health workers are recognized in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act as important members of the health care workforce.
- The evidence shows that they can help improve health care access and outcomes; strengthen health care teams; and enhance quality of life for people in poor, underserved, and diverse communities.
- Case studies: Massachusetts and Minnesota

# Massachusetts

- **2000**, Created the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW), an organization that does education, research, policy development, and advocacy to promote the workforce.
- **2006**, the landmark health care reform law that Massachusetts adopted included two key policy provisions for community health workers. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health was directed to conduct a comprehensive statewide study of community health workers and provide recommendations for building a sustainable workforce
- **2007**, the MACHW was given a seat on the state's expanded Public Health Council, an organization that advises the Department of Public Health on major policy decisions
- **Community health workers subsequently played a highly visible role by helping more than 200,000 uninsured people enroll in health insurance programs, as mandated by the new law.**

# Minnesota

- **2005**, Created the Community Health Worker Alliance a diverse set of public and private stakeholders transforming the role of community health workers from an occasional “add-on” to a formal component of its mainstream health care system
  - Key issuemaking a financial case for community health workers, in the form of identifying a return on investment for the dollars spent on training and employing them.
- **2007** the Minnesota legislature approved the direct hourly reimbursement of community health worker services under Medicaid
- **2008**, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved a Medicaid State Plan Amendment authorizing the proposed hourly payments for community health workers who work under the supervision of Medicaid-approved physicians and advanced practice nurses.

**Minnesota is the only state thus far to establish Medicaid reimbursement for a full spectrum of community health worker activities across all covered health services.**

# Promotor@s role in health care reform...

- Help enroll people who are eligible for coverage;
- Coordinating access to primary care and behavioral and preventive services
- Helping people manage chronic conditions, particularly underserved populations and people with complex treatment regimens

# Policy considerations...

- Sustainable financing for community health worker services, especially through payment for their services in Medicaid, CHIP, and other major funding streams
- Workforce development resources, including training and career development
- Occupational regulation, such as standards for training and certification; and guidelines for common measures to be used in research and evaluation related to community health workers.

# Key points to consider...

- Promote and support the participation and leadership of community health workers in the development of policies that affect them
- Minimize barriers to training and employment of the workers related to language, education level, citizenship status, and life experience
- Allow and encourage providers to contract with community-based organizations for community health workers' services
- Incorporate the full range of community health worker roles and competencies in the positions for these workers.
- Roles could including outreach and education, advocacy, and health system navigation.

*Community health workers  
part of the solution in health  
care reform implementation  
& successful health  
outcomes...*