



# INTEGRATING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN GEORGIA

Connect Consumers to Resources & Increase Access to Care

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER?

A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a frontline health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has a demonstrated working knowledge of the community and individuals served. CHWs often share life experiences, language, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status with the community in which they serve, increasing their understanding of patient needs and concerns.

## HEALTH DISPARITIES

Racial and ethnic health disparities exist in Georgia. When compared to White Georgians, Black Georgians visit the ER:

**2.7 times more** for diabetes

**1.7 times more** for major cardiovascular disease

**3 times more** for high blood pressure

In general, Black Georgians report having poor health **3% more** than their White counterparts, and Hispanics report poor health **7% more**.

## IMPACT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

**1** Reduction in health disparities

**2** Improved healthcare access

**3** Increased access to appropriate primary care, behavioral health & preventive services

**4** Improved quality of care

**5** Increased cultural competence in healthcare

**6** Savings in healthcare costs



## ROLES FOR CHWs:

- Care Delivery Team Members
- Care Coordinators or Managers
- Health Educators
- Community Organizers or Capacity Builders
- Outreach and Enrollment Agents
- Interpreters

## WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE FOR CHWs?

CHWs have the unique ability to bridge the gap between the healthcare system, social services and communities to improve delivery of care and increase access to services. As research in this field continues to compile, studies have begun to demonstrate the positive impact of CHWs on improving health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs.

## TITLES FOR CHWs:

- Peer Educators
- Outreach Educators
- Promotoras de Salud
- Peer Health Promoters
- Community Health Advisors
- Lay Health Advocates

## NEXT STEPS TO ENSURE SUCCESS

### Workforce Development

There is a growing consensus among CHW supporters and stakeholders across the state that a standardized certification process is needed to advance the CHW workforce in Georgia. Certification will assure CHWs are proficient according to an established set of skills and competencies and will also provide a framework for reimbursement of CHW services.

### Sustainable Funding

CHWs were traditionally funded by grants or worked as volunteers in the community. Grant funding and volunteer sources are great in the short-term, but long-term sustainability is needed. Many states are pursuing reimbursement from Medicaid as a preventative service.