Community Health Workers: Building a Movement for Equity and Social Justice during COVID-19

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NIHCM
ABOUT NACHW

VISION: Community Health Workers united nationally to support communities in achieving health, equity and social justice.

ENGAGE
CHWs, Allies, Supporters, Partners, Sponsors, and Influencers

EXPAND
Membership, Recognition, Opportunities, and Collective Action

ENHANCE
CHW Leadership Skills and Opportunity

EDUCATE
Stakeholders on the Impact of CHWs

ESTABLISH
National Voice and Sustainable Strategies On Issues Related To CHW Workforce
“I’ve had difficulty getting a response from the emergency response teams in my community. I’ve called, emailed the city, joined their Facebook groups, answered their questionnaires, etc. It is very frustrating.”

- CHW respondent to NACHW March 2020 Survey
Response and recovery efforts must be **embedded in and in partnership with communities** to be equitable and effective.

I would like to be included in the planning rather then being told something after the fact. I feel what I am expected to do is being decided without my input.

- CHW respondent to NACHW March 2020 Survey
CHW Roles in Building an Equitable Vaccine Infrastructure

- CHWs can co-design, develop, distribute and evaluate materials and strategies that appropriately respond to community health beliefs, misinformation and cultural concerns.

- CHWs can coordinate and administer screenings for food, housing, financial needs and mental health services and help people navigate to or directly access these services.

- CHWs can navigate technology, literacy, language, enrollment and transportation barriers to ensure access to vaccines, emergency services and health care coverage.

- CHWs can coordinate mobile testing and vaccination sites, organize tabling and registrations, collect data and monitor symptoms, and engage home-bound, house-less and transient community members.
CHWS Address Historic and Systemic Racism

Understand and respond to low trust, mistrust and distrust among Black, Latinx, Native and other communities of color as well as a history of medical apartheid.

Avoid terms like “vaccine hesitancy” which reduce centuries of mistreatment to surface solutions that more information will resolve these concerns.

Unethical and harmful medical treatments and experimentation are not things of the past.

Misinformation in effective COVID-19 vaccines is magnified when community members cannot reach trusted individuals to answer questions, address concerns and help navigate increasing complexities.
CHWS Promote and Protect Social Justice

Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center

We encourage all who have witnessed or experienced micro-aggressions, bullying, harassment, hate speech, or violence to help us document. The more information we have, the better we can respond and prevent further incidents from occurring.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS AND COVID-19
THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

BACKGROUND
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) represent nearly 5.6% of the US Population and are expected to grow to 10% by 2050, faster than any other racial or ethnic group. Far from being a monolith, these communities have diverse cultures, languages and lived experience, and trace their origins to at least 19 countries in East and Southeast Asia. The “myth of the model minority” promotes a belief that AAPI’s have fewer problems with health and with racism when in fact they share significant disparities in both areas.

The National Association of Community Health Workers offers three ways that Community Health Workers can inform and advocate for AAPI communities to improve their health and well-being during the pandemic and beyond.

1. Language Access: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires interpreter services for all patients with limited English proficiency who are receiving federal financial assistance, however in most states these services are an unfunded mandate.

What CHWs Can Do: Inform AAPI communities with Limited English Proficiency of their rights and connect them to high quality resources. Learn more about the Cultural and Linguistic Access Service Standards.

Visit https://nachw.org/covid-19-resources/ for more COVID-19 resources for CHWs.

2. Data Disaggregation: Data collection analysis and reporting are needed to understand the impact of COVID-19 and ensure that Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities are visible and heard.

What CHWs Can Do: Data collection is one of the critical roles of the CHW profession and can improve services and outcomes. CHWs can advocate with employers and in communities for data collection that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

3. Racial Discrimination: AAPIs are more likely to report negative experiences because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak, including being subject to slurs or jokes, and fearing someone might threaten or physically attack them.

What CHWs Can Do: Use and share local and national Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center website with AAPI communities and service providers (available in English and 11 other languages).
“CHWs – and NACHW – should be front and center as federal and state leaders seek to move out of the pandemic and re-open society.”

Claire Qureshi, Community Health Acceleration Partnership at the World Health Organization
Reports and Playbooks for Employers

FROM CRISIS TO OPPORTUNITY: Resources and Guidance that CHWs Want from Employers During the Pandemic

Over three weeks in June 2020, NACHW collected responses from Community Health Workers (CHWs) on their needs and how employers can best support CHWs to protect themselves, provide services safely and adapt services to the changing environment. NACHW wanted to hear directly from these frontline public health workers about:

- The areas of work where CHWs would like more guidance.
- The resources CHWs want employers to have access to or develop to support their work.
- What are the critical attributes that should be included in these resources.

There were 70 respondents as of June 30, 2020, when the window to provide feedback closed. Almost half of respondents were NACHW members. Data was available for NACHW members to understand the roles and expertise of survey respondents. 82% of the NACHW members who completed the survey were CHWs, and NACHW member respondents represented 19 states.

Recommendations for CHW Employers

1. Health and Safety: Ensure adherence to OSHA guidelines and develop and implement other health and safety policies and practices to ensure CHW and community safety.
2. Recognize and respond to infrastructure and support needs of CHWs.
3. Partner with CHW employers to identify best practices for CHW practice during COVID-19 and adapt existing practices to respond to changing needs.
4. Provide training for CHWs in best practices for meeting client and community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advancing CHW Engagement in COVID-19 Response Strategies

A Playbook for Local Health Department Strategies in the United States

The National Community-Based Workforce Alliance
Joint Statement On Ensuring Racial Equity In The Development And Distribution Of A COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 Sparked A Health Equity Movement – And Vaccines Are Just The Beginning

Webinar: Overcoming Barriers To Equitable And Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution
The National Association of Community Health Workers Calls on Public and Private Institutions to Respect, Protect, and Partner with Community Health Workers to Ensure Equity During the Pandemic and Beyond

CDC CHW Section Members will distribute the NACHW Policy Platform to their members and encourage them to consider using and citing this document as a reference tool and checklist ANY time they give a presentation or write about CHWs...in other words, make sure they explicitly take into account and/or incorporate the items listed.

- CDC CHW Workgroup Co-chairs

I have shared this with our colleagues who work on the hill. I will also plan to include this in our next edition of the population health and prevention newsletter. - ASTHO Senior Staff
Our Work Continues.

Promote, Protect and Pay CHWs as essential critical infrastructure workers

Create Workforce Infrastructure to Support CHW Physical and Psychosocial Mental Health

Share Insights to Adapt and Improve COVID-19 Response

Integrate CHW Leadership in the Design and Development of COVID-19 Response Strategies

Encourage CHW Engagement in Local, County and State CHW Networks

Strengthen Support for CHW Self-Care and Develop Targeted Approaches to Address their Concerns

Insights on COVID-19 From Community Health Worker State Leaders

Susan Mayfield-Johnson, PhD, MCHES;
Denise O. Smith, MBA, CHW, RN; Sara A. Crosby, MPH;
Catherine G. Haywood, BSW; Joelisa Castillo, CHW;
Dolantria Bryant-Williams, MBA, CHW;
Kim Jay, RN, CHW; Milagrosa Seguinot, AS, CCHW;
Trevia Smith, CHW; Nicole Moore, CHW;
Asley Wenerstrom, PhD, MPH

Abstract: Community health workers (CHWs) leverage their trusting relationships with under-resourced populations to promote health equity and social justice in their communities. Little is known about CHWs roles in addressing COVID-19 or how the pandemic may have affected CHW's ability to interact with and support communities experiencing disparities. A focus group with CHW leaders from 7 states revealed 8 major themes: CHW identity, CHW resiliency, self-care, unintended positives outcomes of COVID-19, technology, resources, stressors, and consequences of COVID-19. Understanding the pandemic's impact on CHWs has implications for workforce development, training, and health policies.

Keywords: community health, community health worker, COVID-19, health equity, resiliency, workforce development
Thank You

www.NACHW.org

Info@NACHW.org