Community Health Worker Panel: Engaging for Oral Health

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What is a Community Health Worker?

Community Health Workers:

• Work as frontline public health workers.
• Have a close understanding of the communities they serve and are trusted members of the community.
• Serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.
• Build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy.
History of Community Health Workers in Missouri

• In 2013, Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) received a collaborative agreement from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) focusing on chronic disease control and a piece of that grant focused on community clinical linkages.

• Partnerships were formed to determine community needs in the most crucial areas of the state based on the Social Determinants of Health.

• As a result, we found that there was a need for Community Health Workers who could focus on increasing health knowledge around diabetes and cardiovascular disease through outreach, community education and social supports.

• Community Health Worker Advisory Committee was established.

• Training at Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) to increase the Community Health Worker workforce.
Community Health Worker Success

• Core competencies and curriculum were established for community college use
• Department of Social Services (DSS) pilot
• Partnership with the Missouri Primary Care Association (MPCA)
  • Child care
  • Dental
  • Food
  • Housing
  • Medical Coverage/Insurance
  • Mental Health/Substance Abuse
  • Utility Assistance
• Community Health Worker Association of Missouri
• Credentialing of Community Health Workers
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Suzanne Smith, Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri
Joy Weis & Lacey Martens, Jordan Valley Community Health Center