



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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LaReecia Carter, Family Health Centers, St. Louis, MO

Suzanne Smith, Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri

Joy Weis & Lacey Martens, Jordan Valley Community Health Center