Evolution of CHW Training and Certification in Texas: Getting From Here to There

Julie St. John, DrPH, MPH, MA, CHWI
Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
Beverly MacCarty, MA
Maternal and Child Health Program Coordinator
Office of Title V and Family Health
Texas Department of State Health Services

Presenter Disclosures

Julie St. John

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose

Beverly MacCarty

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose
Who’s out there?

Use your smart phone
• Text JULIESTJOHN to 37607
  (your standard texting rates may apply)

Online: PollEv.com/juliestjohn
• Where do you live? (what state?)
• Does your state have statewide CHW credentialing or certification?
• If no, is your state considering developing one?
• If yes, does your state evaluate the credentialing process?
• What’s the best food you have eaten in Chicago so far?

How it all began: The history of CHW certification in Texas

Mid-1990s – context for initial legislation

Promotora organizations
Stakeholder meetings
Legislators – border districts
Initial legislation 1999
Promotor Program Development Committee

- CHW programs
- Curriculum
- Certification
- Evaluation
- Pilot
- Reimbursement

Outcomes

- Legislation – Texas 77th Legislature, Regular Session, 2001
- SB 751 – HHS agencies utilize certified promotores/CHWs in health outreach and education for Medicaid recipients
- SB 1051 - DSHS (then TDH) develop and implement training and certification program
  - Voluntary (no compensation)
  - Mandatory (compensation)

Core Competencies

- Communication
- Interpersonal
- Service Coordination
- Advocacy
- Teaching
- Organization
- Knowledge base health issues
Promotor(a)/CHW Training and Certification Advisory Committee

- Claudia Bustos, CHW - 2014 - 2015, Community Health Center of Lubbock
- María Escobar, CHW - 2015, South Texas Prevention, Inc.
- Gary Glenn Eagleton, CHW - 2014, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
- Claudia Bustos, CHW - 2016, Community Health Center of Lubbock
- Oscar J. Muñoz, CHW - 2015, Professional Working with CHWs
- Venus Ginés, M.A., Public Member, Día de la Mujer Latina Inc.
- Bobby D. Hansford, CHW - 2016, Harris Health System
- Jean Youngstrom Diebolt, MSN, Public Member, Family Nurse Practitioner
- Julie St. John, MA, MPH, DrPH, Professional Working with CHWs
- Richard Rosing, Higher Education Member, Houston Community College System

Certification in Texas

- First certificates issued in 2002
- CHW Training and Certification Program
  - Located at Department of State Health Services – Office of Title V and Family Health
  - Provides certification for:
    - Promotores or Community Health Workers
    - Instructors
    - Training Programs

http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/chw.shtm

Growth of the CHW Workforce and Certification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Certified CHWs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2007</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2008</td>
<td>979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2009</td>
<td>1,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2010</td>
<td>1,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2011</td>
<td>2,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2012</td>
<td>2,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2013</td>
<td>3,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2014</td>
<td>3,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2015</td>
<td>3,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC 2016</td>
<td>4,135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructors and Training Programs

- Approximately 240 certified instructors
- 38 training programs
  - Community colleges
  - Health Science Centers
  - AHECs
  - CHW associations
  - Community-based organizations
  - FQHCs

Renewal

- Every 2 years
- Continuing education requirements
- Challenges
  - Renewal rate ≤ 50%
CHW Evaluation Survey

Initial concept/purpose
– Current: Process evaluation
– What do we know about the benefits of certification? For:
  • CHWs
  • Individuals/communities served by CHWs
  • Employers

Priority activity – begin by focusing on CHW perspectives re: benefits/challenges

Development

• Evaluation Workgroup
  – Advisory committee members
  – Identify key survey areas
  – Draft and refine survey questions
  – Survey style (i.e. yes/no questions, open ended questions, Likert scale)
  – Target
    • Complete during expiration year
    • Voluntary
  – Pilot at large CHW conference
  – Review/adoptions by full Advisory Committee

Survey Sections

• Introduction
  – Purpose
  – Assurances (voluntary, anonymous, not affect certification or recertification status)

• Experience
  – Years serving as a Promotor(a) or CHW
  – Years as certified Promotor(a) or CHW
• Certification
  – Meaningful or Valuable
    • better equipped me to serve my community and make a difference in the community I serve.
    • increased the respect and value shown to me by my community
    • increased my self-confidence as a Promotor(a)/CHW
    • gives value to this profession
    • better job opportunities
    • increased job responsibilities
    • promotion at work
    • higher salary

• Certification
  – Not Meaningful or Valuable
    • Too many requirements to maintain
    • Lack of recognition
    • Not enough job opportunities
    • Not enough instructors
    • Not enough affordable or accessible CEUs

Why do you maintain your certification?
• Required by employer
• Personal growth/satisfaction
• More employment opportunities
• Increase my salary range
• Professional recognition
• Keep up with latest health information
• Improve my role in the community as a point of contact
• Certification required by employer
• Plan to renew certification
  – If no:
    • Did not open up more employment opportunities
    • Did not lead to promotion
    • Did not lead to higher salary
    • Did not result in professional recognition
    • Not enough affordable and accessible CEUs

Communication

• Communication
  – CHW Advisory Committee meetings and minutes
  – CHW Associations
  – CHW Training Programs

Implementation

• Online survey design (English and Spanish)
• Beta-test
• Dissemination
  – All CHWs with expiration date in 2015
    • Email
    • Mail (no valid email)
      – Postage-paid return envelope
    • Initial – May 2015
    • Reminder – July 2015
    • Targeted reminder {expired/not renewed} – August 2015
    • Reminder – October 2015
Dissemination

- Email (in preferred language for correspondence)
  - English: 1,140
  - Spanish: 272
- Mail
  - English: 75
  - Spanish: 50
- Total: 1,476
  - English: 1,215
  - Spanish: 261

Results

- Completed Surveys: May – September 2015
  - English: 201 (17% return rate)
  - Spanish: 51 (20% return rate)
- Method
  - Computer: English 85%; Spanish: 78%
  - Smartphone: English 12%; Spanish: 17%
  - Tablet: English 3%; Spanish: 5%

Experience
Do you feel your certification is meaningful and/or valuable?

- English: 98% Yes, 6% No, 3% Prefer Not to Answer
- Spanish: 91% Yes, 6% No, 0% Prefer Not to Answer

Does your employer require you to be certified as a CHW?

- English: 50% Yes, 3% No, 6% Not sure, 12% Not employed as CHW
- Spanish: 36% Yes, 3% No, 12% Not sure, 2% Not employed as CHW

Strongly Agree or Agree – Being a certified CHW:

- Better serve my community and make a difference: 89% Spanish, 76% English
- Increased the respect and value shown to me by my community: 85% Spanish, 65% English
- Increased my self-confidence: 85% Spanish, 65% English
- Given value to this profession (other professionals acknowledge my work): 81% Spanish, 55% English
- Better job opportunities: 62% Spanish, 31% English
- Increased job responsibilities: 59% Spanish, 31% English
- Promotion at work: 64% Spanish, 60% English
- Higher salary: 31% Spanish, 60% English

10/27/2015
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons why CHWs may not feel certification is meaningful/valuable</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough affordable and accessible CEU opportunities</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough Instructors to provide training</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough job opportunities</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition of Promotores/CHWs as navigators</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many requirements to maintain the certification</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you maintain your CHW certification?</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role in community as point of contact</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep up with latest health information</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional recognition</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase my salary range</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open up more employment opportunities</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal growth/satisfaction</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required by employer</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you plan to renew your CHW certification?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The image contains a bar chart showing the reasons why CHWs may not feel certification is meaningful/valuable, a bar chart showing the reasons for maintaining CHW certification, and a bar chart showing the plan to renew CHW certification.
Comments from the CHW Evaluation Survey

Check out the cards posted around the room

Lessons Learned/Considerations

- Sustaining/Facilitating elements
  - CHW Advisory Committee support
  - DSHS staff support

- Considerations
  - Lack of responses from individuals whose certification expired
  - Reliance on email or mailed surveys
  - Capacity
  - Frequency
  - Volunteer versus part of required process

Small groups

- How could we better engage CHWs in general for an improved response rate?
- Specifically, how can we better engage CHWs who do not renew certification?
- How can we use this info to inform stakeholders or potential stakeholders (including those who are not actively involved with CHWs at this point in time?)
10/27/2015

Small groups

• How do we use survey results to inform CHW policy in Texas or other states?
• How often should this type of survey be done?
• Pros/cons – voluntary vs. incorporated into recertification process

Questions?

Contact information:

• Texas Community Health Workers/ Promotor(a) Training and Certification Program
  http://dshs.state.tx.us/mch/chw.shtm
  Email: chw@dshs.state.tx.us
• Beverly MacCarty, 512.776.6663, beverly.MacCarty@dshs.state.tx.us
• Julie St. John, 325.696.0473, julie.st-john@ttuhsc.edu