

Community Health Workers: A General Overview

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WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER ?

- ◆ A Community Health Worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to 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.
- ◆ A Community Health Worker also builds 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.***

CHWs in the Sickle Cell Community

Sickle Cell Disease Community Based Organizations have been providing many, of not all, the duties and responsibilities of a CHW for decades and there has been no reimbursement.

- CBOs have had to be responsible for raising money or securing grants
- to ensure that staff are in place to meet the needs of the community. This has been no easy task.
- Let's be sure to consider including CHWs in our State Action Plan.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER IN COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- ◆ CHWs are valued members on any staff
- ◆ Key Functions/Responsibilities May include:
 - Establishing trusting relationships with patients & their families
 - Providing on-going follow-up
 - Conducting intake interviews with patients
 - Assisting with completing applications
 - Helping patients with appointments, transportation
 - Acting as patient advocate
 - Follow-up with patients via phone calls, home visits and visits to other settings