

## PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES AND A CHANGING WORKFORCE: ARE WE VISIBLE? RELEVANT? IMPACTFUL?

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### Learner Outcomes

- *The What:* Describe the Community Health Worker movement as a case study in workforce - and health systems - transformation.
- *So What:* Explore the unique assets and values nurses bring to health systems and workforce transformation.
- *Now What:* Identify strategies for nurses to assert positive engagement in workforce transformation: How do we connect in order to achieve a Culture of Health?

### What is a Community Health Worker?

*A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a trusted member of the community with a close understanding of the community who contributes to a team-based approach to improve community health and achieve health equity. This relationship with the community enables the CHW to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between the health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve quality and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-efficacy through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy. Community Health Worker is an umbrella term used to define other professional titles.*

Douglas Co. (NE) CHW Workgroup, 2017

### Background: the CHW movement in Nebraska

- Highly dynamic, highly variable, highly innovative
- No consensus or consistency in competencies, role, training, expectations
- Nurses involved as trainers, advocates, employers, researchers, and supervisors

### CHWs – SWOT analysis

- **S** – increased diversity in the health care workforce
- **W** – lack standardization, consistency, and role clarity; low acceptance by health professionals and teams
- **O** – reach disadvantaged and disenfranchised members of society; build a diversity pipeline to the health professions; more effective, integrated health care teams
- **T** – high variability in preparation means high variability in delivery; another silo of practice – creating a separate health system for the disadvantaged; no boundaries – potential for being assigned/performing activities reserved for the licensed professions; public trust and safety at risk;

### CHW workforce and a Culture of Health

- Opportunities to engage consumers in conversations about how the health workforce is transforming: identify shared values.
- Workforce evolution impacts many sectors and thus must be collaborative and mutually respectful.
- Greater awareness of social determinants of health, particularly the “contexts and consequences” that impact opportunity and access to resources.
- Integrated, multidisciplinary teams including CHWs represent opportunities to improve consumer experience and effectiveness of care delivery.

## CHWs and Nurses: Framing Questions

- In what ways can nurses make positive contributions to health systems transformation?
- How might nurses make meaningful contributions to a changing workforce?
- How is workforce evolution made better when nurses are fully engaged?
- What stopping nurses from lending voice and influence to transformative processes?
- What are the potential consequences of nurses not being present in this conversation?

## Nurses' Voices, Nurses' Leadership

- **Activity:** *In what ways do nurses uniquely make health systems better?*

## Nurses' Voices, Nurses' Leadership

- In 2017, a project team of nurses considered the evolving landscape of the CHW workforce in Nebraska. The work was informed by
  - *Profiles of nursing leadership in the CHW movement*
  - *A project inventory of CHW projects in NE*
  - *A policy crosswalk of five national policy statements*
  - *A bibliography of useful resources.*

## CHW Policy Crosswalk: *The Voice of PHNs?*

## Nurses' Voices, Nurses' Leadership

- One of the significant project results was a set of recommendations regarding the CHW workforce in NE.
- **Activity:** please review and discuss the Nursing Recommendations for Development of the CHW Role in a Transforming Health System. *What would you add, delete, or revise?*

## Nurses' Voices, Nurses' Leadership

- Another project result was a set of strategies proposed for building collaboration and trust between CHWs and Nurses.
- **Activity:** please review and discuss the Recommendations for the Nebraska Action Coalition. *What strategies would you add, delete, or revise?*

## Nurses and CHWs: Framing Questions

- In what ways do nurses make positive contributions to health systems transformation? **Unique and trusted voices for ethics, quality, supervision, collaboration, social justice**
- How might nurses make meaningful contributions to a changing workforce? **Advocate for adoption of consistent standards of preparation and practice for CHWs. Demonstrate respect and amplify the potential CHWs represent to improve health.**
- How is workforce evolution made better when nurses are fully engaged? **Leverage influence as the largest and most trusted of health professions.**

## Nurses and CHWs: Framing Questions

- What stopping nurses from lending their voices and influence to transformative processes?
- What are the potential consequences of nurses not being fully present in this conversation – on our own terms?

## PHNs: Relevant, Visible, and Impactful

- What are your responses to the Framing Questions?
- **What Now:** Identify strategies for nurses to assert positive engagement in workforce transformation: How do we connect in order to achieve a Culture of Health?
- **Be confident in our ability to make meaningful contributions: Show Up!**
- **Don't mistake deference for collaboration: Speak for Ourselves!**
- **Don't allow our own history to be co-opted or distorted: Own who we are!**
- **Create expectations for high quality, standardization, and accountability: Call on others to be better.**

Thank You!  
*May the Force Be With You*

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- Find the project work at <http://neactioncoalition.org/community-health-worker-role-chw/>
- Many thanks to the Project Team and Steering Committee