



# Engaging with Community Health Workers and How They are Supporting Louisiana's COVID-19 Response Efforts

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Louisiana's Health Initiative

# Presenters

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# Learning Objectives:

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- Describe common roles for Community Health Workers (CHWs) in clinical and non-clinical settings
- Describe methods Louisiana partners are using to increase the use of and support for the Louisiana CHW workforce
- List three ways CHWs responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in Louisiana

# COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

# Community Health Worker (CHW) Definition

- A frontline public health worker who is a **trusted member** of and/or has an **unusually close understanding** of the community served





# Community Health Worker (CHW) Definition

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- This **trusting relationship** enables the CHW to serve as a **liaison/link** between health/social services and the community to **facilitate access** to services and improve the **quality and cultural competence** of service delivery
- The CHW 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

# CHW SKILLS AND ROLES



# CHW Skills

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- CHW Core Consensus (C3) Project
  1. Communication
  2. Interpersonal & Relationship Building
  3. Service Coordination & Navigation
  4. Capacity Building
  5. Advocacy
  6. Education and Facilitation
  7. Individual & Community Assessment
  8. Outreach
  9. Professional Skills & Conduct
  10. Evaluation & Research
  11. Knowledge Base



# CHW Roles

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- CHW Core Consensus (C3) Project

- Cultural Mediation Among Individuals, Communities, & Health & Social Service Systems
- Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education & Information
- Care Coordination, Case Management, & System Navigation
- Providing Coaching & Social Support
- Advocating for Individuals & Communities
- Building Individual & Community Capacity
- Providing Direct Service
- Implementing Individual & Community Assessments
- Conducting Outreach
- Participating in Evaluation & Research

# CHWs Wear Many Hats



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- Patient Navigator
  - *Promotes de salud*
  - Peer Counselor
  - Parent Liaison
  - Outreach Worker
  - Health Advocate
  - Community Health Educator
  - Peer Advocate
  - Family Planning Counselor
  - Family Support Worker
  - Community Health Representative



# CHWs Address Diverse Issues

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- Chronic Disease
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Cancer
  - Cardiovascular
- Infectious Disease
  - HIV/AIDs
  - STIs
  - Hepatitis C
  - TB
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Lead Poisoning Prevention
- Parenting Education and Support
- Violence
  - Domestic
  - Sexual
  - Youth
  - Suicide
- Environmental Justice
- Emergency Preparedness
- Nutrition Services
- Tobacco Control
- Access to Social & Health Services

# CHWS IN NON-CLINICAL SETTINGS

# CHWs Work in Various Settings

- Hospitals
- Community health centers
- Managed care organizations
- State and local health departments
- Community-based organizations
- Schools
- Public housing authorities





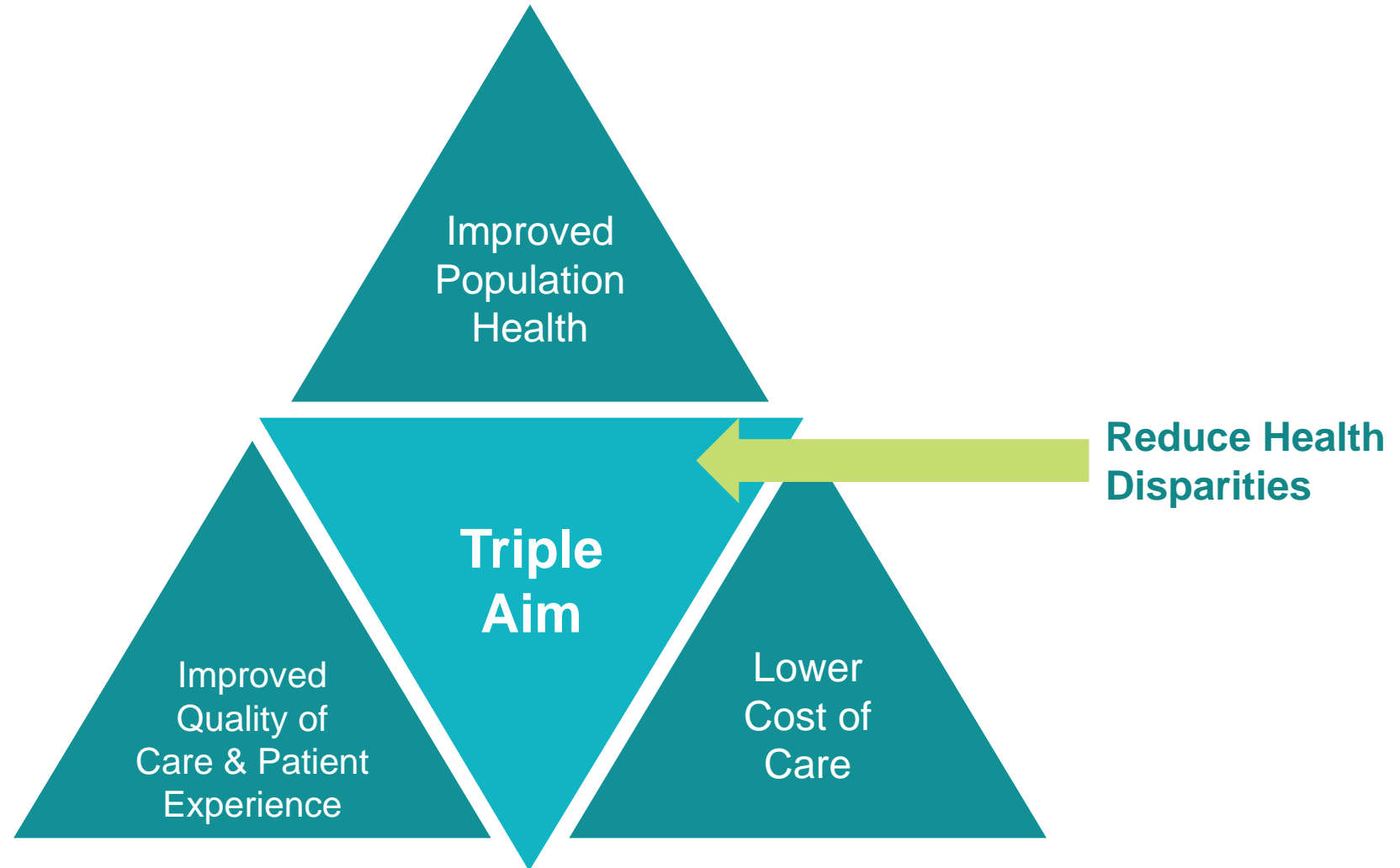
# Common Roles for CHWs in Non-Clinical Settings

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- **Cultural mediation between communities**
  - Intimate knowledge of the communities they work permits CHWs to serve as cultural ambassadors for their clients
- **Informal counseling and social support**
  - Provide client-centered counseling to support clients to live healthier and better lives
  - May help clients to set health-related goals and may use techniques such as motivational interviewing to support clients in reducing health-related risk behaviors
- **Advocating for individual and community needs**
  - Advocate within the community whenever possible, to ensure clients have access to basic resources to live healthy lives
- **Building individual and community support**
  - Work with groups and community networks, building the capacity of individuals to speak out and take action in their own lives and communities

# CHWS IN CLINICAL SETTINGS

# CHWs and the “Triple Aim” + Health Equity





# CHW Roles in Clinical Settings

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- Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends engaging CHWs in
  - Screenings for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers
  - As part of a team-based care model for cardiovascular disease prevention
  - Health education related to diabetes prevention & management
- Increasing patients' health literacy
- Conducting care coordination and home visits
- Insurance enrollment
- Health Education

# FINANCING CHWS IN LOUISIANA



# The Challenge: CHW Financing

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- Health Systems and Providers
  - Core operating budgets, after conducting pilots that demonstrate ROI
  - Grant funding
  - Medicaid Managed Care Financing: State Plan Amendments and Medicaid Waivers
- American Rescue Plan Act Of 2021
  - Allocated funding for CHWs in public health departments
  - CHWs can serve as a bridge between public health, healthcare and social services



# Examples of CHW Efforts

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- Louisiana CHW Workforce Committee
- Louisiana Community Health Outreach Network (LACHON)
  - Professional Association for CHWs in Louisiana
- Medicaid Managed Care Organizations
- Public Health Programming
  - Office of Public Health
    - Community HealthWays
    - COVID-19 Response
  - Louisiana Breast & Cervical Health Program
  - Ending the HIV Epidemic



# Recommendations for the LA CHW Workforce Study Committee

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- Members of the Louisiana CHW Workforce Study Committee (CHW Coalition), along with other stakeholders, should continue to collaborate as the LA CHW Workforce Coalition
  - At least half of the members should be CHWs
  - The CHW Coalition should advise on ongoing CHW workforce policy issues and support implementation of the recommendations listed below
- The State of Louisiana should adopt and use the American Public Health Association CHW definition for all State CHW policies and programs
- The State of Louisiana should adopt the CHW Core Consensus (C3) Project as a guideline for developing CHW programs, and ensure that Louisiana CHWs have the capacity and support to carry out the full range of CHW roles



# Recommendations for the LA CHW Workforce Study Committee

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- The CHW Coalition should provide technical assistance to CHW-led professional groups
  - These groups can support the workforce by convening CHWs and offering training.
- The CHW Coalition should create a process to evaluate and recognize standardized CHW core competency training programs
  - Certifying CHWs is not recommended at this time
- The CHW Coalition should create a voluntary, online CHW registry in partnership with CHW professional groups



# Recommendations for the LA CHW Workforce Study Committee

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- The CHW Coalition should collaborate to develop a broad, statewide educational campaign about CHW roles and program implementation models for health care providers, community based organizations, public health practitioners, and the general public
- The CHW Coalition should provide technical assistance to organizations that currently employ CHWs or plan to hire CHWs
  - This support should include sharing best practices in CHW program development and implementation, as well as data collection strategies
- All State CHW programs should use common, standardized measures to track CHW programs and outcomes
- The CHW Coalition should collaborate with Louisiana Medicaid to create a CHW benefit to be financed on a per member, per month basis

# CASE STUDY

# Community HealthWays



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- **Goal:** seeks to improve the quality of life for Louisiana residents by helping address individuals' health-related social needs and the community factors that drive them
  - Launched in May 2019
  - Piloted in St. Landry Parish Health Unit
  - Paused in April 2020

# Why *Community* **HEALTHWAYS** ?

## Problem

Unaddressed social determinants of health precipitates poor health outcomes



## Solution

Community Health Workers (CHWs) screen and navigate Parish Health Unit Patients to community resources to address social needs



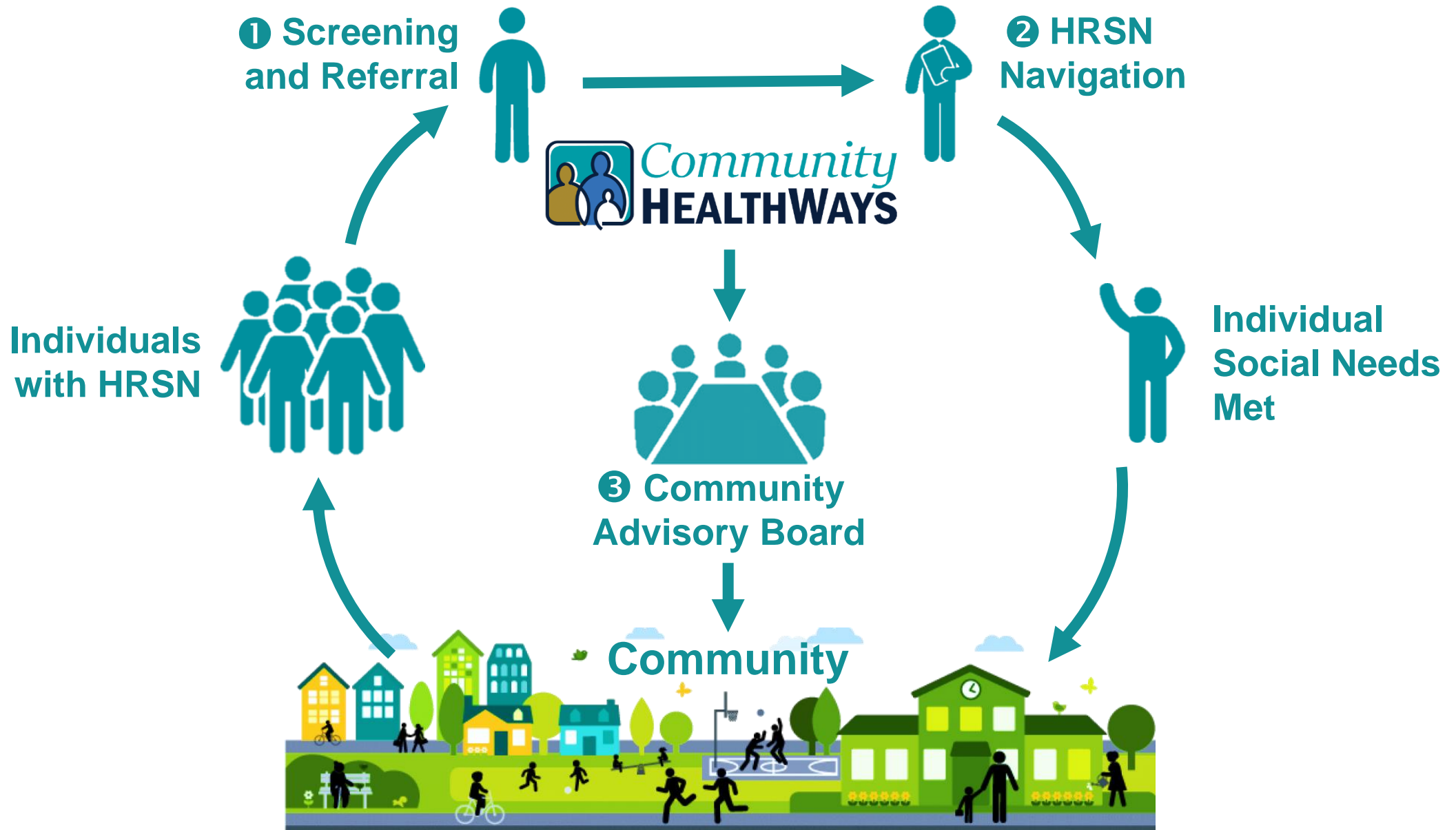
## Impact

Cost savings to  
health system

Reduced ED visits

Reduced hospital  
readmissions

Increase patients'  
self-efficacy



# CHWS AND COVID-19 RESPONSE



# CHWs and COVID-19 Response

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- CHWs overwhelmingly responded by delivering the following resources directly to those affected by COVID-19
  - Food
  - Medication pick-up
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Difficult-to-access cleaning supplies
- CHWs were trained to conduct COVID-19 contact tracing, in which they helped to interview people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 by phone to identify their contacts and reach out with information on how to prevent COVID-19 transmission, as well as where to access testing
- CHWs help screen communities with promotion Covid-19 testing and promotion of COVID-19 vaccination sites in rural and vulnerable populations



# No Matter the Role—The Goal is the Same!!

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- CHWs have a core characteristic: their proximity to the community they serve
- They are stakeholders invested in building relationships, reducing mortality rates and improving the community by using “boots on the ground” mentality to reach the community

# Final Thoughts

CHWs enhance Public Health and communicate trust within their communities. As a CHW myself, I would state that it is an honor to advocate for those who may not know where to begin on their own.

Thank You.

**QUESTIONS?**



# Contact Information

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Thank You for Joining Us!