CHW Workforce Development and the Oregon Community Health Workers Association

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Objectives

By the end of the presentation, participants will know more about:

- Origins of the Oregon CHW Association (ORCHWA)
- How ORCHWA is funded
- How ORCHWA interacts with Oregon Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs)
- ORCHWA’s work in training and workforce development with CHWs
- ORCHWA’s work in evaluation and research with and about CHWs
ORCHWA Definition of CHWs

- CHWs are trusted community members who participate in capacitation (empowering training) so that they can promote health in their own communities (Farquhar, Michael and Wiggins, 2005).

- Communities can be defined by race/ethnicity, geography, age, sexual orientation, disability status, other factors, or a combination of factors.
Origins of the CHW Profession

- Natural healing and helping systems have existed in all communities.
- Formalized where people were systematically denied health care and the conditions for health.
- Has been dedicated to increasing health equity.
ORCHWA Origins

- 1960s – present: Oregon’s long history of successful CHW/promotor/a programs
- 1994: First statewide CHW network organized
- 2011: ORCHWA organized

Mission: To serve as a unified voice to empower and advocate for Community Health Workers and our communities
ORCHWA Funding

- Originally received in-kind support from the Oregon Latino Health Coalition and the Community Capacitation Center at the Multnomah County Health Department
- In 2017, received a major investment from Health Share of Oregon, Oregon’s largest CCO
- Currently, 13+ different funding sources including grants, contracts, fee for service
ORCHWA’s work with CCOs

- CCO = Oregon’s version of an accountable care organization (loose translation!)
- HSO investment supports ORCHWA to develop infrastructure to act as a broker between health systems and community based organizations (CBOs)
- ORCHWA provides: training for CHWs and supervisors, online case management platform, research and evaluation services
- Currently developing contracts with Kaiser Permanente and pursuing contracts with other systems
Training and Workforce Development at ORCHWA

- Assessment of training needs
  - Happens informally and formally in the context of ORCHWA’s Collaboratives
  - Statewide needs assessment recently conducted

- Methodology/philosophy of training:
  - Popular/people’s education
  - Both cross-cultural and culturally specific
Training and Workforce Development at ORCHWA

- **Initial training:**
  - Based on curriculum developed at the Community Capacitation Center, which was based on the 8 skills clusters identified in the 1998 Natl. Community Health Advisor Study
  - Prepares CHWs to play a full range of roles
  - Qualifies CHWs for certification in OR

- **On-going training:**
  - Developed based on demand from CHWs and employers
  - Helps to meet continuing education requirements for certified CHWs/promotores/as
Research and Evaluation (R&E) at ORCHWA

ORCHWA is committed to:

- Contributing to the body of academically credible research and evaluation about CHWs and CHW programs
- Doing R&E in partnership with CHWs
- Building CHWs’ skills as researchers
- Creating the next generation of CHW researchers, who are themselves CHWs (an essential part of workforce development!)
National CHW Common Indicators Project

- ORCHWA is lead organization.
- Goal: To strengthen the science regarding CHW contributions to health and health care by identifying and promoting uptake of common process and outcome indicators for CHW practice.
- Project team includes 50+ CHW leaders; researchers; health agency leaders; and leaders of culturally specific community based organizations employing CHWs.
Thank you!