

Community Health Workers in the US and Tennessee

*An effective, culturally competent,
and low cost approach to community
health.....*

Community Health Workers are...

- Respected community members with strong interpersonal skills
- Intelligent and like to learn
- Excellent communicators
- Intellectually curious
- Open to new ideas



Community Health Workers

- Improve health behavior and outcomes
- Bridge cultural and linguistic barriers to good health
- Expand access to care and coverage





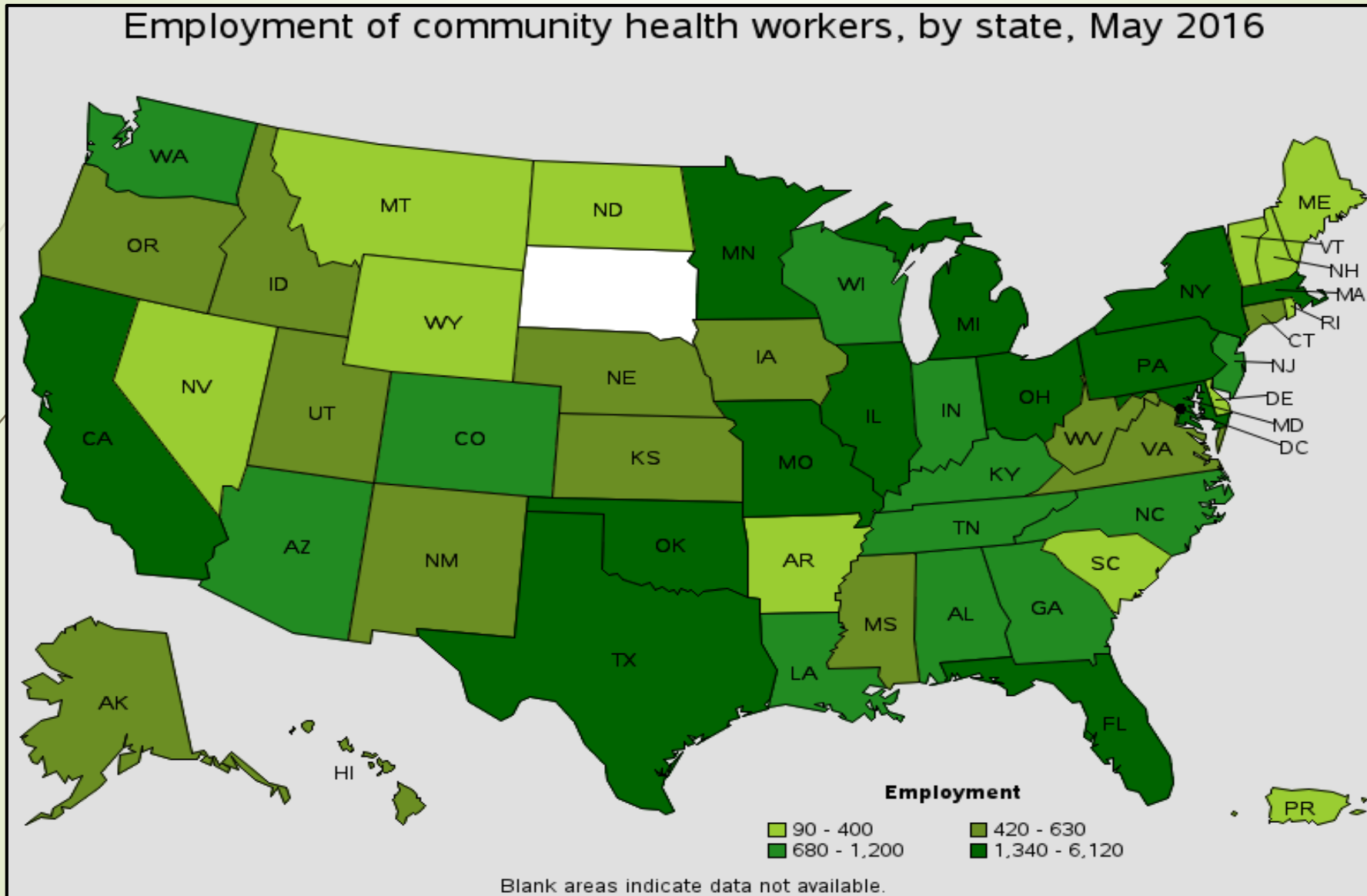
Community Health Worker typical responsibilities

- Assist with problem solving
- Help people receive the care they need
- Help clients prepare for and follow through after medical encounters
- Advocate for community health needs
- Link people to community resources
- Use home visits, group sessions, meetings, and other methods to provide guidance and education on health behavior

But not necessarily called Community Health
Workers.....

Community Organizer
Case Managers
Long Term Care Ombudsmen
Care Coordinators
Parent Educators
Health Educators
Outreach Workers
Peer Counselors
Healthy Living Directors
Lifestyle Coaches
Social Counselors
Peers
Prevention Coordinators

48,000 CHWs in the U.S.



US
Bureau of
Labor
Statistics,
May 2016

Community Health Worker settings



- Clinics and hospitals
- Community organizations
- Insurance companies
- Schools
- Public health departments
- State agencies
- Urban, suburban, rural



CHW Impact

- **Diabetes:** Enhanced patient management (Islam et al., 2013, Spencer, 2011)
- **Cardiovascular disease:** Reduced risk (Allen et al., 2011)
- **Access to services:** Increased (Kangovi et al., 2014, Palmas et al., 2012; Harris, 2001)
- **Post-hospital outcomes:** Health after discharge improved (Kangovi et al., 2014, Palmas et al., 2012; Harris, 2001)
- **Psychosocial and psychological health:** Improved (Mutamba et al., 2013)
- **Malaria and pneumonia:** Enhanced case management (Hamer et al., 2012, Mubi et al., 2011)

More CHW impact

- ➔ **Asthma:** decreased child symptoms, visits to the emergency room, urgent care (Postma, 2009)
- ➔ **Child health:** reduced illness, promotes immunizations, encouraged exclusive breastfeeding
- ➔ **Tuberculosis:** Improved outcomes of TB treatment (43 randomized controlled trials)
- ➔ **HIV/AIDS:** Reduced patient wait time, health workers' workload, stigma and increased patients' sense of belonging within their communities. (Mwai et al. 2013)
- ➔ **Hypertension:** Improved blood pressure control, adherence to medication (Brownstein 2007).
- ➔ **Cervical cancer:** Increased screening (Arrosi et al. 2015)

Tennessee CHW impact

MIHOW mothers

- Breastfeed longer
- Lower parental stress
- Fewer depressive symptoms
- Read more to their children
- Provide safer sleep environments for infants
- Provide more stimulating home environments



Lutenbacher, Elkins 2017

CHWs reduce the cost of care

At a patient-centered medical home in NYC, using CHWs with diabetic patients led to:

- Hospital savings of \$1135 per patient
- For every dollar invested, \$2.30 saved
- Fewer chronic health problems
- Less use of Emergency Departments
- Fewer subsequent hospitalizations





To implement a solid and effective CHW program.....

- Recruit the right person
- Provide good orientation, training, and supervision