

Contracting with Community-Based CHW Providers

One option for healthcare providers interested in integrating CHWs services into their care is to contract with a local community based CHW service provider already providing CHW services.

There are a **number of benefits to this approach**:

1. For healthcare providers benefits include:
 - a. **Increased trust in health care providers among community members.** Given the distrust that many Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and low-wealth communities have with healthcare, it can take healthcare organizations a long time to establish, if ever, the level of trust that community-based organizations have in community.
 - b. **Increased accuracy in knowledge of CHWs, available community resources, and design of CHW role on the healthcare team.** Working with an experienced CHW service provider can provide invaluable guidance and information as partners designing CHW programs with healthcare providers.
 - c. **Increased capacity to effectively address social determinants of health.**
2. For community based CHW providers benefits include:
 - a. **Increased sustainability by diversifying income streams.**
 - b. **Increased recognition as a valuable health care partner**, which can lead to future funding through contracts and grants and enhanced visibility in the community at large.
 - c. **Professional development opportunity and career pathways for employees.**

Some of the **known challenges to this approach** include:

- Identifying a community-based partner trusted by providers/employees of the practice AND has the capacity to enter and manage a contractual relationship.
- Time it takes to establish and manage an agreement/contract.
- Common understanding of proposed program/services.

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- Time to onboard the CHW to clinic operations, build awareness across the clinical team, and fully integrate the CHW into clinic workflows.
- Time to establish and engage CHW and clinical team in key components of new CHW Program: ***This below list is similar for establishment of employment based CHW programs.***
 - Understanding across Referral criteria and process.
 - EHR documentation templates and workflows.
 - Data capture and reporting for program evaluation.
 - Internal supervision of CHW – ensuring that the clinical team has the capacity to provide regular supervision and case review/consult.
 - Training resources – part of onboarding and supervision. Will need to make sure the CHW has a HIPAA secure laptop or tablet and is trained to use the EHR. Will also need to assess CHW skills and provide training on key skills to support success of the program (e.g., supporting telehealth visit, use of NCCARE360, demonstrating use of an automatic BP cuff and keeping a BP log at home, SDOH screening, depression screening, etc.)

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