

Advancing Pharmacy Technicians into Enhanced Roles: Intro to Community Health Workers (CHWs)

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DISCLOSURES

Faculty

Courtney Johnson and Quinn Mead, faculty for this activity, have no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose.

Planners

None of the planners for this activity have any relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.

PRE-TEST

1. Which of the following analogies best describes the role of CHWs?
2. Which of the following is NOT one of the five domains for social determinants of health?
3. What is the first key step in implementation of cross-training a pharmacy technician as a CHW?
4. True or False: CHWs utilize active listening and the teach-back method to engage patients in effective communication.

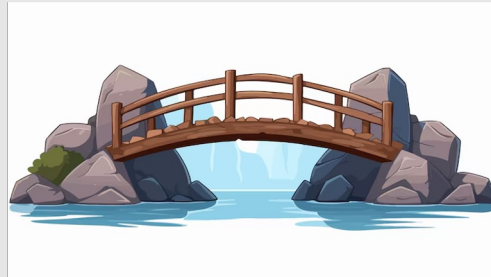
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Session Objectives

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities of community health workers (CHWs) in pharmacy practice.
2. Understand social determinants of health, community resources, and communication techniques to effectively educate and empower patients to improve health outcomes.
3. Develop an implementation plan for cross-training a pharmacy technician into the CHW role and integrating a cross-trained CHW into the workflow.

- A CHW is a health professional that connects the communities they serve to health services.
- Many patients face barriers navigating the healthcare system and CHWs provide resources that patients may not know are available.
- By identifying patient needs, CHWs connect patients to available health and social resources to improve health outcomes.¹

What is a (CHW) Community Health Worker?



Roles & Responsibilities

Identify and Resolve Medication Access Barriers

- Affordability issues
- Medication adherence
- Vaccination gaps in care

Address Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

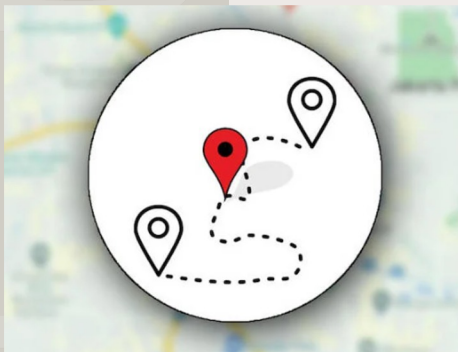
- Transportation barriers
- Food insecurity
- Housing and supply needs

Overview of the role of CHWs in Healthcare



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The Role of Pharmacies in Community Health



The average person visits a pharmacy 35 times a year. Almost 90% of Americans are located within 5 miles of a pharmacy.² Access means more opportunities to impact patient care!

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Chat with a CPhT-CHW:

How would you describe your unique role as a cross-trained community health worker in an independent community pharmacy practice?



Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) Community Resources and Communication Techniques

The CHW “Secret Sauce”

To make their impact, CHWs leverage a unique skillset with a practical understanding of:

- Social determinants of health
- Communication techniques and
- Community resources



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Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)³



Five domains:

1. Economic Stability
2. Education Access and Quality
3. Healthcare Access and Quality
4. Neighborhood and Built Environment
5. Social and Community Context

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Community Resources

Check your county for a complete list of available resources

like:

- Meals on Wheels / food pantries
- Community resource centers
- Local health departments
- Senior centers
- Faith-based organizations
- Support groups
- Women's / pregnancy care centers
- Interurban / transportation services
- Substance use disorder services
- Home health services

Communication Techniques

1. **Simplify Language:** avoid complex medical jargon
2. **Active listening:** observe verbal and nonverbal cues
3. **Teach-back-method:** ask patients to explain in their own words to assess understanding
4. **Build trust:** create a comfortable, safe environment
5. **Motivational interviewing:** use open-ended questions to help patients explore thoughts about their health
6. **Establish collaboration:** use shared-decision making

Putting it into Practice: CPESN MO Pilot⁴

SDoH Screening by Pharmacy Personnel

- All pharmacy personnel, including delivery drivers, completed SDoH training to help identify patients presenting with social needs using a screening tool.
- Eligible patients were referred to cross-trained CHW pharmacy technicians who conducted a comprehensive SDoH assessment.
- Patients then got connected to community resources to meet their needs, saving over \$87,000 in estimated annual out of pocket prescription savings!

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Putting it into Practice: Transitions of Care⁴

SafeMed Care Transition Medication Management Program

- Cross-trained CHW assigned to a healthcare team to oversee health barriers
- 1st year - home visits and telephone follow up for medication reconciliation, medication disposal, and comprehensive medication reviews.
- Referred patients with potential medication errors or adverse effects to pharmacist
- 2nd year - medication-related education including purpose and adherence aids
- Outcomes included increased rates of patient follow-up, drug-therapy problems detected, and targeted MTM referrals completed along with high patient satisfaction!

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Chat with a CPhT-CHW:

What are a few community resources you learned about during your CHW training?

How do you feel better equipped in your communication skills to interact with patients after completing CHW training?



Cross-training and Implementing a CHW into Pharmacy Workflow

Equipping Cross-Trained CHWs

Learn how to Demonstrate, Develop, Coordinate, and Implement...

- Effective communication strategies with patients and other professionals
- Personal values, strengths, and challenges personally
- Healthy behavior change in your community through services / programs
- Collaborations with community organizations to promote wellness

Consider the certification course offered through CE Impact:

- Learn how to effectively communicate with patients
- Connect with local community resources
- Provide patient education and document encounters
- Learn how to refer, follow-up, and monitor patients
- Obtain 60 hours of service/experiential learning
- Receive certificate recognized by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)

CHW Training & Certification ⁵



**Pursue grant opportunities
through KPhA and KDHE when
they become available!**

Working as a CHW in Kansas:

1. Submit application materials to Kansas CHW Coalition.
 - a. Of note, you will need to include a copy of your certificate card from the Missouri Credentialing Board.
 2. Apply for certification through one of three pathways:
 - a. Education: complete KDHE approved training program
 - b. Work: complete 800 hours over 3 years
 - c. Reciprocity: MO Community Health Worker certified
- Certification will be active for two years and requires renewal.

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CHWs in Workflow

- Outreach phone calls and home visits for med sync program
- Enhanced delivery services
- Coordination of medication adherence packaging services
- Facilitation of grant programs
- Screening patients for vaccinations and preventative care needs
- Educating patients about safe medication use and proper medication disposal
- Identification and referral of patients to diabetes prevention / education programs



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Chat with a CPhT-CHW:

Why would you recommend a pharmacy implement cross-training of a CHW into their practice?

How would you identify the right pharmacy technician candidate to cross-train as a CHW?



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Key Implementation Steps:

1. Secure support and funding for CHW certification training.
2. Identify a pharmacy technician candidate to cross-train.
3. Pair the CHW candidate with a pharmacist champion.
4. Support technician during certification, including providing time to meet with community resources and complete projects.
5. Following certification, enhance the technician's role within the pharmacy team to utilize their CHW skills.

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Taking Your Next Step:

What could you envision a cross-trained CHW adding to your pharmacy services?

What questions do you have as you think about implementation in your pharmacy?

In Conclusion

Pharmacy technicians are an integral part of their community and hold an influential position to impact public health.

Cross-training pharmacy technicians as community health workers has the potential to be beneficial for patients in addressing healthcare barriers, especially those related to medication. Take the next step to foster better relationships and rapport with your patients and community resources by making a plan to integrate a cross-trained CHW into your pharmacy team!

POST-TEST

1. Which of the following analogies best describes the role of a community health worker?

- a. A bridge, someone who bridges the gap between healthcare and the community
- b. A train, someone who efficiently moves patients to a destination of health and wellness
- c. A navigator, someone who guides patients through healthcare complexities

POST-TEST

2. Which of the following is NOT one of the five social determinants of health domains?

- a. Healthcare access and quality
- b. Economic stability
- c. Neighborhood and built environment
- d. Nutrition access and quality

POST-TEST

3. What is the first key step of cross-training a pharmacy technician as a CHW?

- a. Provide the CHW candidate time to meet with community resources
- b. Identify a pharmacy technician candidate to cross train
- c. Secure support and funding for CHW certification training
- d. Pair the CHW candidate with a pharmacist champion

POST-TEST

4. True or False: CHWs utilize active listening and the teach-back method to engage patients in effective communication?

- a. True
- b. False

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THANK YOU!



Questions?

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