

A day in the life of a _____ Community Health Worker

Meet Carmen, a community health worker (CHW) at a Mercy Clinic

Community health workers like Carmen go by many different titles and work for organizations like clinics, hospitals and within the communities.

PROMOTORA
DE SALUD

PATIENT
NAVIGATOR

PEER
COUNSELOR

CARE
COORDINATOR

OUTREACH
WORKER

LAY HEALTH
ADVISOR

COMMUNITY
HEALTH
REPRESENTATIVE



But what, exactly, does Carmen do?

BUILDS TRUST

Carmen's days are varied, but community members constantly turn to her for information and assistance regarding their social needs.



OFFERS IN-PERSON HELP

Today Carmen visits Andre, who struggles to manage his diabetes and high blood pressure.

As a result, he often finds himself in the ER.

They discuss barriers to sticking with his treatment plan and ways to avoid going to the ER.



CONNECT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Carmen takes a call with Kiara, a pregnant woman who struggles to afford healthy food.

Carmen provides information on local nutrition programs and helps her fill out paperwork for a food assistance program.



Carmen is vital to the health of her community

In Mercy, our CHWs carry on the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy who went out into the community to care for those in need. As with each of us, they live out their roles with deep compassion reflective of the healing ministry of Jesus. CHWs can improve health outcomes, reduce disparities, and save money by helping people navigate the health care system, find resources, and live healthier lives.

NAVIGATES THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Andre struggled to find a primary care doctor, so Carmen finds him an appointment and even goes with him.

Andre also does not have health insurance, so Carmen helps him apply to Medicaid or Mercy Financial Assistance.



To learn more, contact your clinic manager or your local Community Health leader.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER CLINIC FAQ

What is a Community Health Worker?

- A community health worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. A community health worker also builds individual and community capacity by increasing basic health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy. (APHA Definition)

What does a Community Health Worker do?

- **Bridge the gap between individuals and the health/social service system**
 - Educate individuals about how to access health care and social support services
 - Educate individuals on how to access health/social services in the community and assist with preparing for visits/appointments (ensuring they have the proper documentation ready before visits, helping complete applications if there are barriers to literacy or language).
 - Assist patients in applying for financial assistance and insurance programs, including Medicaid
- **Advocate for needs of patients**
 - Articulate and advocate for the needs of patients to the health system and community agencies
- **Navigate health/human services system**
 - Inform and link patients to available resources in the community, particularly those related to Social Determinants of Health
 - Teach individuals the knowledge and skills needed to obtain care the individual is seeking (how to access a specific service in the community).
 - Facilitate outpatient continuity of care by assisting individuals with coordination of services and providing follow-up
- **Provide Direct Services**
 - Promote wellness by providing culturally appropriate health information to patients.
 - Assist individuals in self-management of illnesses and medication adherence (i.e follow up to ensure patients are adhering to provider protocols and, if not, finding out what those barriers are and communicating with the team that is working with the client)
 - Provide social support
 - With specialized training, provide health education focused on disease prevention

What do Community Health Workers NOT do?

- CHWs do not replace nurses, counselors or social workers. CHWs complement these health professionals in important ways by developing and maintaining trust, rapport and candor with patients and by providing follow-up to support to address social determinants of health.
- CHWs do not transport clients to services; however, they can facilitate coordination of transportation to and from appointments.
- CHWs do not perform routine clinic office functions on a regular basis, such as answering phones, checking in patients, or making routine appointment reminder calls.

