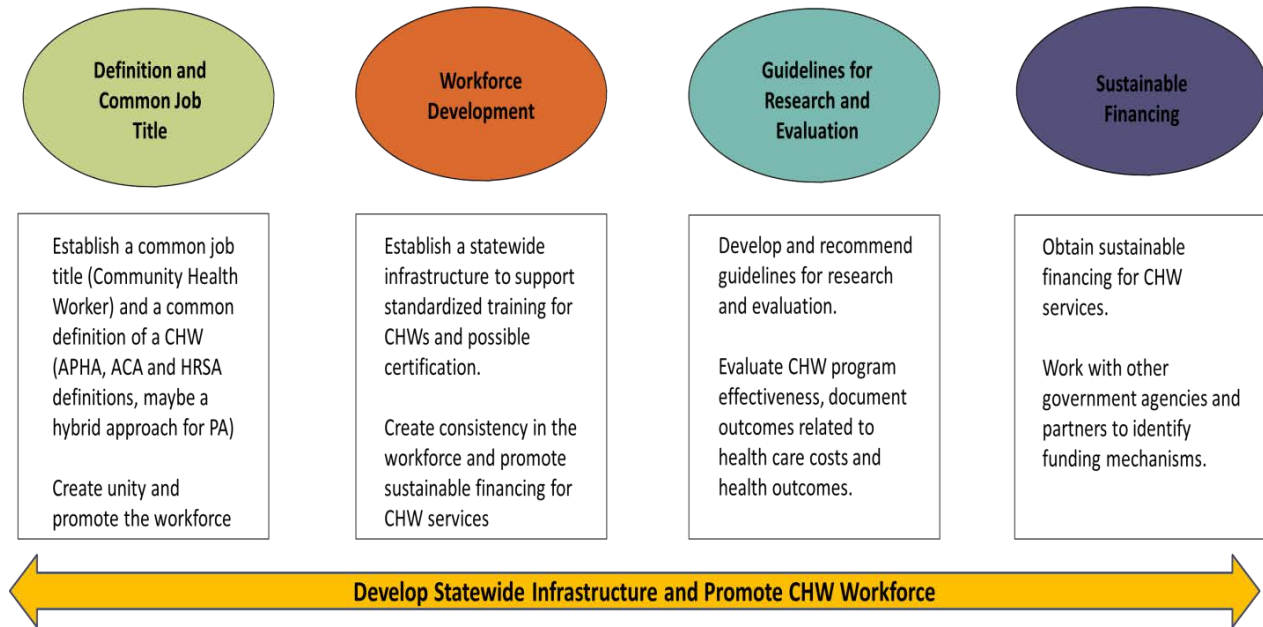


Community Health Worker (CHW) Workforce Project Strategy

Based on responses from over 160 Pennsylvania organizations to the CHW environmental scan and feedback from partners, a strategy was developed to support the CHW workforce. DOH, along with partners at the state and community level will promote policy, program development, program evaluation and growth of the CHW field.



Please note that CHW strategy is subject to change based on continuing research and feedback from CHWs and partners.

- 1) Recommend a **common job title** (Community Health Worker) and a **common definition of a CHW** (ACA, APHPA, HRSA or hybrid of APHA and ACA definitions)
- 2) Recommend **minimum training standards** for CHWs. There are eight core skills that the National CHW Advisory Study recommends (communication skills, interpersonal skills, knowledge of the community/specific health issues/health and social service systems, service coordination skills, capacity building skills, advocacy skills, teaching skills and organizational skills).
- 3) Recommend **guidelines for research and evaluation** for the CHW workforce.
- 4) Obtain **sustainable financing for CHWs**. Data needs to be presented to insurers and legislators to garner support for reimbursement of CHW services. Data also needs to be collected and shared with potential and future employers to expand the workforce.
- 5) Develop a **statewide infrastructure** for CHWs and create a website (livehealthypa.com) that will be used as a hub for CHW related information and resources. The website will include: reports, resources, community information, CHW tool kits, success stories, and forum for CHWs to communicate with one another.
- 6) Continue to **educate** partners and the public of the importance of the CHW workforce.
- 7) Continue to **build partnerships** and work with stakeholders to **promote** the CHW workforce.

PA Department of Health (DOH) – CHW Project Summary Spring 2013 to Present

- Spring 2013 – PA CHW Environmental Scan (survey) developed and disseminated to PA organizations
- Summer 2013 – PA CHW Report, based on PA CHW Environmental Scan (survey) results, released to public and partners
- Fall 2013 to Present - Meetings with internal and external partners to obtain feedback on how to proceed with CHW project.
 - Internal Partners include DOH representatives from the following programs: cancer, HIV/AIDS, EMS, heart disease, lead prevention, healthy homes, asthma, diabetes, STDs, human resources, and community health systems
 - External Partners include representatives from following types of organizations: academic institutions, legislative offices, community based clinics, FQHCs, health systems, health care

organizations, hospitals, health associations, national experts, other state departments of health, EMS/EMT personnel, pharmaceutical companies, insurers, physicians, area health education centers, nurses, PA Department of Human Services and PA Department of Labor and Industry

- Spring 2014 to Spring 2015 – Participated on planning committee for PA CHW Statewide Summit and first PA CHW Strategic Planning Day
 - Spring 2015 – first PA CHW Summit held on May 5, 2015 in State College, PA. Over 280 registrants including 80 community health workers participated in Summit
 - Spring 2015 – On May 6th, the first strategic planning meeting took place with key partners and community health workers to discuss policy, employers and training issues and objectives for CHW workforce; approximately 38 partners participated in the strategic planning meetings.
 - Three workgroups established: Policy, Employer and Training/Certification
- Summer 2015 – Wrote a Letter of Support for Dr. Steven Granich from Lock Haven University for his application for the Center for Rural PA grant; the information collected will help with promotion of CHW workforce and identification of barriers or issues facing rural health care in PA
- Fall 2015 --- The three task forces listed above plus one additional Steering Group task force each had their first teleconference. All groups will be researching other states' actions in the perspective areas. The current focus for each of the task forces are listed below:
 - **Steering Group** – This task force will provide oversight of the task forces and the year-long strategic planning process. They will monitor progress, the composition and size of the groups, and maintain transparency. They will continue to recruit for and encourage 50% CHW member composition of the groups. Current CHW membership is at 15% overall.
 - **Policy** – This task force will be focusing on the *definition* of CHWs for the first two monthly calls, *certification* of CHWs in the next two monthly calls, *financing* during the following two, and *measurement* in the next two.
 - **Employer** – This task force is working on a survey for current CHW employers to determine a standardized list of interview questions for inclusion in their employer toolkit.
 - **Training** – As seen, this task force decided certification was more of a policy issue and therefore is focusing solely on training. They are working on establishing the various roles of CHWs and the different competencies (core vs. specialization). There was discussion about the possibility of certifying training programs versus certifying CHWs.
- Ongoing
 - Collect CHW program and activity information that are taking place in PA to help partners connect with each other and to facilitate in tracking the growth of the CHW workforce in PA
 - Work with internal and external partners to develop website, specifically paying attention to needs for the CHW webpage
 - Work with partners to build statewide infrastructure for CHW workforce
 - Obtain feedback from partners, foster partnerships and communicate CHW information
 - Prepare CHW reports and diagrams for partners to use to understand CHW workforce
 - Provide CHW information to internal and external partners that are working on disease specific CHW strategies
 - Educate partners and general public of the CHW project and the importance of the CHW workforce; presentations at local, state, and national level conferences as well as poster presentations are used as forums to educate partners and the public