

# The Three Ws of Community Health Workers: Who, What, & Why

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 **The HAP Foundation**  
Hospice and Palliative Care Research & Education



# Learning Objectives

Upon completing this session, participants will be able to:

- After participating, learners will understand the benefits, contributions, and outcomes, including education and outreach, associated with including CHWs within hospice or palliative care interdisciplinary teams.
- After participating in this workshop, learners will possess a general template to support in embedding CHWs into hospice and palliative care interdisciplinary teams.



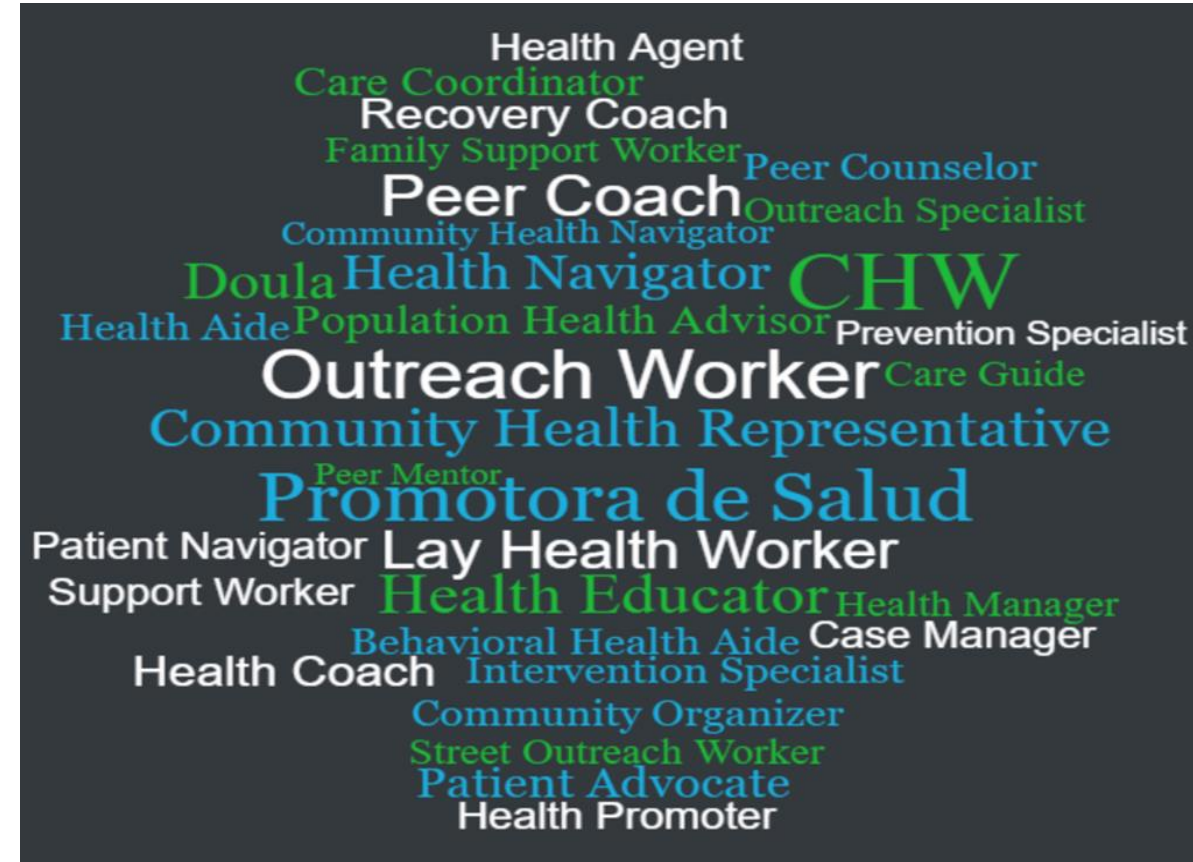
# Section One

## Who: The History of CHWs

# Who Are CHWs?

A CHW 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.



# Origins of CHWs

## Internationally

- Russian Feldshers
- Chinese Farmer Scholars & Barefoot Doctors
- Tanzanian village-based volunteer CHWs
- Bangladeshi Family Planners

## In the Americas

- Latin America Promotoras de Salud
- United States Neighborhood Health Aides
- 1968 IHS Community Health Representative (CHR) program

(Perry, 2013)



# Recent History of CHWs in The U.S.

- CHWs in the American Public Health Association (APHA)
- Important research & legislation
- Founding of NACHW
- CHWs in a global pandemic



# CHW Core Functions and Roles

How  
CHWs  
Address  
SDoH &  
Improve  
Health

Direct Service

Capacity  
Building

Social Support

Navigation &  
Care  
Coordination

Health  
Education

Advocacy

Outreach &  
Assessment

Cultural  
Mediation

Evaluation &  
Research



# Section Two

## Why: CHWs Are Invaluable

## Serious Illness Team Members

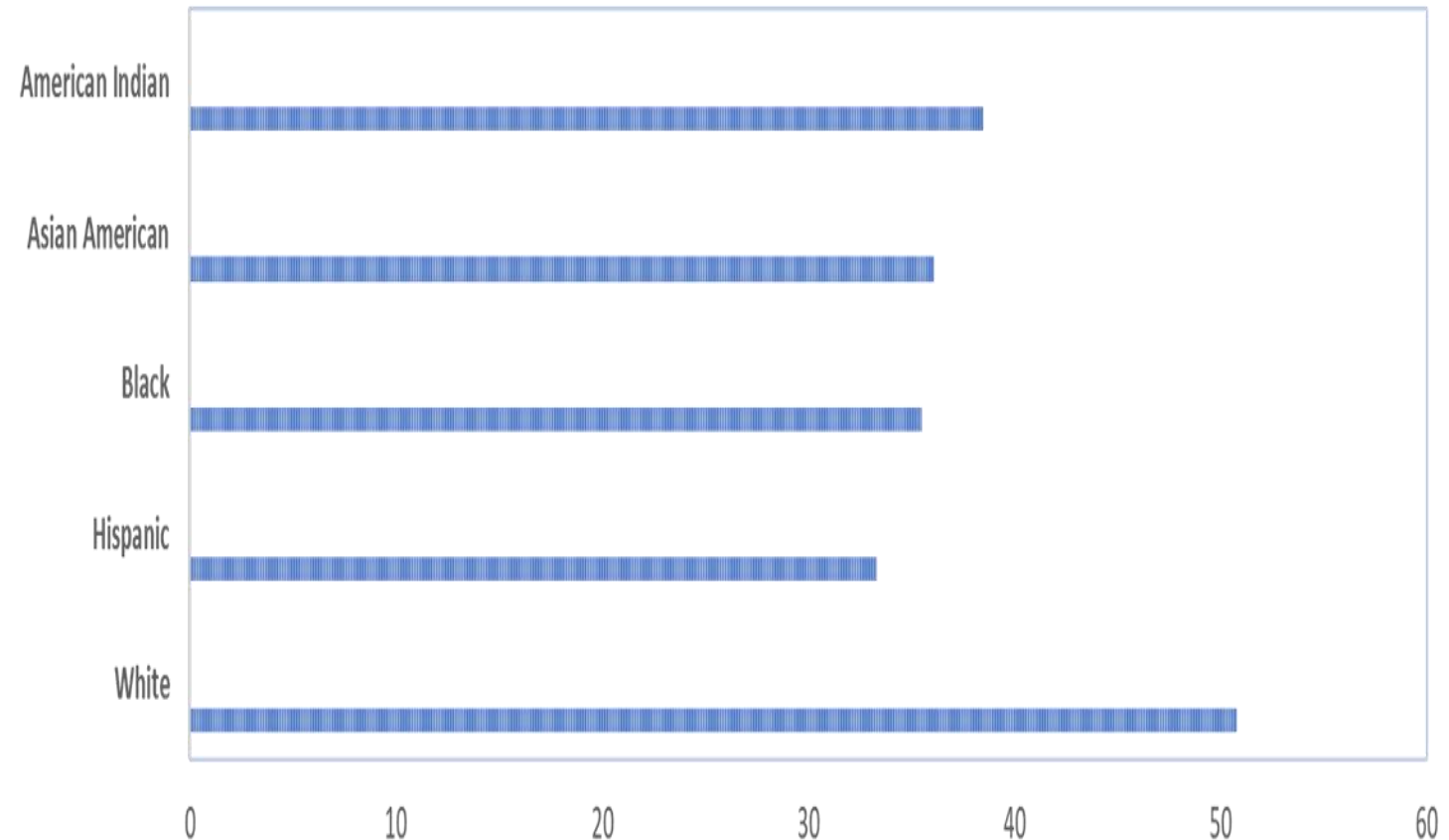


# Utilization Disparities

“Perhaps it goes without saying that the inequities historically underserved communities face throughout life continue through the end of life.”

--Addressing Inequities in End-of-Life Planning and Care: Advancing Equity at Life's End Summit Report 2021

PERCENT OF MEDICARE DECEDENTS BY RACE WHO USED HOSPICE



# Why Do Utilization Disparities Matter?

## Changing Demographics within the United States

### By 2050

- Americans over the age of 65 will double to a population of 84 million.
- Those who identify as members of specific racial and ethnic communities will grow to surpass well over 50% of the United States Population.

### Benefits of Hospice and Palliative Care

- Improved quality of life
- Reduced risk of depression
- Longer survival
- Reduced symptom burden



# Section Three

## What: CHW Roles in Serious Illness

# CHW Roles in Interdisciplinary Teams



- Bridges between the provider and the patient.
- Assisting with insurance applications and understanding medications.
- Assistance with housing needs, food insecurity, transportation needs.



# Other Ways CHWs Support Care Teams

- Reduce health disparities in underserved communities
- Support for behavioral health Issues
- Provide culturally appropriate care
- Education on Chronic disease prevention, nutrition, and exercise
- Advocacy-Participation on Community Advisory Boards
- Collecting data to share with IDT Teams



# CHWs as Serious Illness Educators



# Section Four

# How: Implementation and Funding

# Implementation- Keys to Success

**Getting C-Suite Buy-in:** Hospices are facing increased competition in the marketplace and intense scrutiny to provide high-quality care along with expectations for improved access to care. Utilizing CHWs in these roles can have a major impact on moving forward key strategic initiatives.

**Financial Impact:** CHWs have an important role to play in supporting an organization to grow into traditionally underserved and rural communities, increasing opportunities for managed care contracts and value-based payment arrangements.

**Staff Buy-in:** Like music therapy, art therapy, expanded grief support, and other extra services, CHWs improve the experience of patients and families as they navigate their journey through serious illness.





# Funding Opportunities

- Medicaid reimbursement in some states
- Medicare FFS Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule for 2024 adds reimbursement options for some CHW services
- Grant funding opportunities
- Census growth potential
- Alternative payment models
  - Add into MA contracts



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**Any Questions, Thoughts, or  
Comments?**

# Thank You!

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