

CROWD

Center for CHW Research, Outcomes, and Workforce Development

Newsletter
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CROWD Supports Chicago's Covid-19 Community Response Corps

The Chicago COVID-19 Community Response Corps, formerly known as Contact Tracing Corps (subsequently referred to as the Corps), has continuously evolved to meet the changing demands of the pandemic. Having successfully trained and on-boarded a cohort of roughly 600 staff from community-based organizations hit hardest by the pandemic, the CROWD team continuously supports the diverse needs of people who are new to the community health workforce.

As the project evolved, attention shifted to the long-term needs of Corps members who wish to explore community health as a career that goes beyond COVID-19. Corps members have the option to use up to seven hours a week of work time towards "earn and learn" opportunities provided by partners on the project (Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, SUHI, Malcolm X College, University of Illinois at Chicago and NORC at the University of Chicago). SUHI provided community health worker (CHW) core skills training modules as part of the "earn and learn" initiative, training over 100 Corps members with the foundational skills needed to transition into CHW careers (as of June 30, 2021).

CHW core skills training modules were also provided to six organizations within the Corps who have begun to work as "promotores de salud" or health promoters. These 120 health promoters have started to use the skills acquired from the training to educate and address vaccine hesitancy in communities that have low vaccine uptake. They are equipped to have difficult conversations with community members and provide them with education and resources to access information around the vaccine. SUHI's CROWD team is in the process of planning how to best support the COVID-19 Community Response Corps in year two of the project and is excited to continue to grow and develop this promising workforce!

Results of CHW Pilot in Near Western Suburbs

For the past two years, Community Memorial Foundation (CMF) and Healthy Communities Foundation (HCF) have supported a CHW pilot in Chicago's near western suburbs to advance health equity by improving access to culturally competent care at five diverse organizations. SUHI serves a dual role in the project by (1) providing CHWs initial and on-going training and leading monthly learning collaborative sessions and (2) evaluating the initiative. CHWs are vital in connecting people with the resources and information they need to be healthy. During the project's second year, in the midst of a global pandemic and social unrest, CHWs across all organizations held 453 outreach events and engaged with more than 54,000 new community members, a nearly tenfold increase from year one.



*graphic created by HCF and CMF Communications Teams

The pandemic presented unique challenges and creative adaptations as each organization rapidly shifted operations and adjusted workflows. With in-person meetings shifting online, CHWs responded rapidly and creatively by offering a range of virtual programming beyond their usual content. Programs ranged from educational sessions to telehealth appointments, online cooking demonstrations and interactive webinars. These programs are a testament to the adaptiveness of CHWs to reimagine ways of connecting with community members and adjusting to an ever-shifting environment.

CROWD Presents at CHW Summit

In May, SUHI presented at the Illinois Public Health Association's 1st Annual Community Health Worker Summit: CHWs - Empowered, Essential, and Everlasting. The virtual summit consisted of breakout sessions with presentations focused on the history of CHWs and CHW certification and curriculum, among others.

SUHI's Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) team – Program Manager Yesenia Galvan, CHW III Adelaide Holloway, and CHW III Aidyn Ocon, presented "CHWs as Lifestyle Coaches: Implementing a Community-based National Diabetes Prevention Program." DPP is a free, year-long program that offers patients the tools to avoid type 2 diabetes before they are diagnosed. Through this program, participants are taught the skills needed to lose weight, be more active, and manage stress.

SUHI is one of 10 community partners hosting the Chicago CARES (Chicago Collaboration to Advance Reach Equity and Systems) DPP classes, and is currently developing a hub model whereby health care, social service and community-based organizations can refer patients to SUHI's DPP. The Chicago Department of Public Health, in collaboration with the Illinois Public Health Institute, launched Chicago CARES which aims to reduce diabetes inequities through increasing access and participation in CDC-recognized lifestyle change programs. In addition, telehealth diabetic retinopathy screening in high-burden, underserved communities is provided. SUHI uses extensively trained CHWs as lifestyle coaches to implement this high-touch DPP model.

The presentation was well received! SUHI is grateful for the opportunity to share about DPP and its benefits for participants.

CROWD Launches Oral Health Training

CROWD recently collaborated with partners at the Illinois Department of Public Health to develop an oral health continuing education curriculum for CHWs. The training includes how to have a healthy mouth, impact and symptoms of oral diseases, disease prevention, and fear of visiting a dentist.

On May 3, 2021, the CROWD training team piloted the module with SUHI CHWs alongside CHWs from JourneyCare, Inc. and SUHI's CHW pilot in the near western suburbs, a group of five organizations who participate in trainings and learning collaboratives led by CROWD staff.

Participants enjoyed the training and learned important oral health information to share with clients. The CROWD team is doing some fine-tuning before making the training available as a part of our training offerings.

CROWD Team Member Kim Jay Joins NACHWA Board!



The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) unifies the voices of CHWs and strengthens the profession's capacity to promote healthy communities nationally. Members come from organizations throughout the country and all share a collective passion to support communities in achieving health, equity and social justice.

In May of 2020, NACHW announced they would hold an election for new board members. Kim Jay, lead CROWD trainer and NACHW ambassador at the time, was nominated and accepted to run for a board member position. Campaigning for the seat involved interviews by the Candidate Forum and submission of a campaign video to the nomination board. Due to the pandemic, the voting process was virtual instead of in-person at the national conference, including the swearing-in ceremony where oaths were taken. NACHWA members voted during the virtual annual national conference on August 27, 2020, where Kim won one of the four open seats! SUHI is thrilled for Kim and grateful for her contribution to NACHWA and the CHW profession.

With the new role of board member, Kim is now a vocal part of the national advocacy process regarding all things CHW. She hopes other CHWs will use their platform in their communities to lift up the role of CHWs and spread awareness of their critical, much-needed and life-changing work. When CHWs are more routinely included as part of multidisciplinary teams that serve communities, achieving health equity inches ever closer.

SUHI Joins IDPH-funded Home Visiting Collaborative Asthma Program

SUHI joined the Home Visiting Collaborative (HVC), a group of four programs throughout Illinois funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health, to provide home-based asthma management education and support. SUHI's CHWs provide virtual home visits for children, their caregivers and adults with uncontrolled asthma.

The four funded programs share the common characteristics of serving asthmatic children, ages 0-17, living in high burden areas of Illinois. Each of the programs collect participant data during five standardized home visits and participants complete American Lung Association's online education tool, Asthma Basics, before or during the first visit. CHWs provide extensive asthma self-management education and measure progress with the standardized Asthma Control Test. Due to Covid-19, visits are occurring virtually or by telephone. We look forward to a future of in-person home visits being possible.