

How CHW Leadership Strengthens Certification: A View from Two States

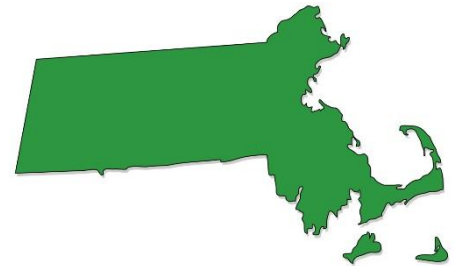
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Disclosures

- Geoff Wilkinson served as founding chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Certification of Community Health Workers and has been involved in CHW workforce promotion since 2002 as director of the Massachusetts APHA affiliate and as a senior manager of the Mass. Department of Public Health.

Contributors



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Session Objectives

- Summarize CHW certification initiatives, including opportunities and concerns
- Describe certification in Florida and Massachusetts
- Present lessons about certification that may be useful in other states



CHW movement is driven by a justice agenda

- CHWs are a historically exploited workforce.
- CHWs and allies seek justice in pay, benefits, supervision, training, job security, and career opportunities.
- CHW movement seeks justice for communities CHWs serve.



Issues raised by CHW integration into health systems

- CHW professional identity
- Scope of practice
- Roles and relationships with other health workforces
- Financing for CHW services
- How and to whom savings accruing from CHW effectiveness will be allocated.

Consensus on Strategic Value of Certification

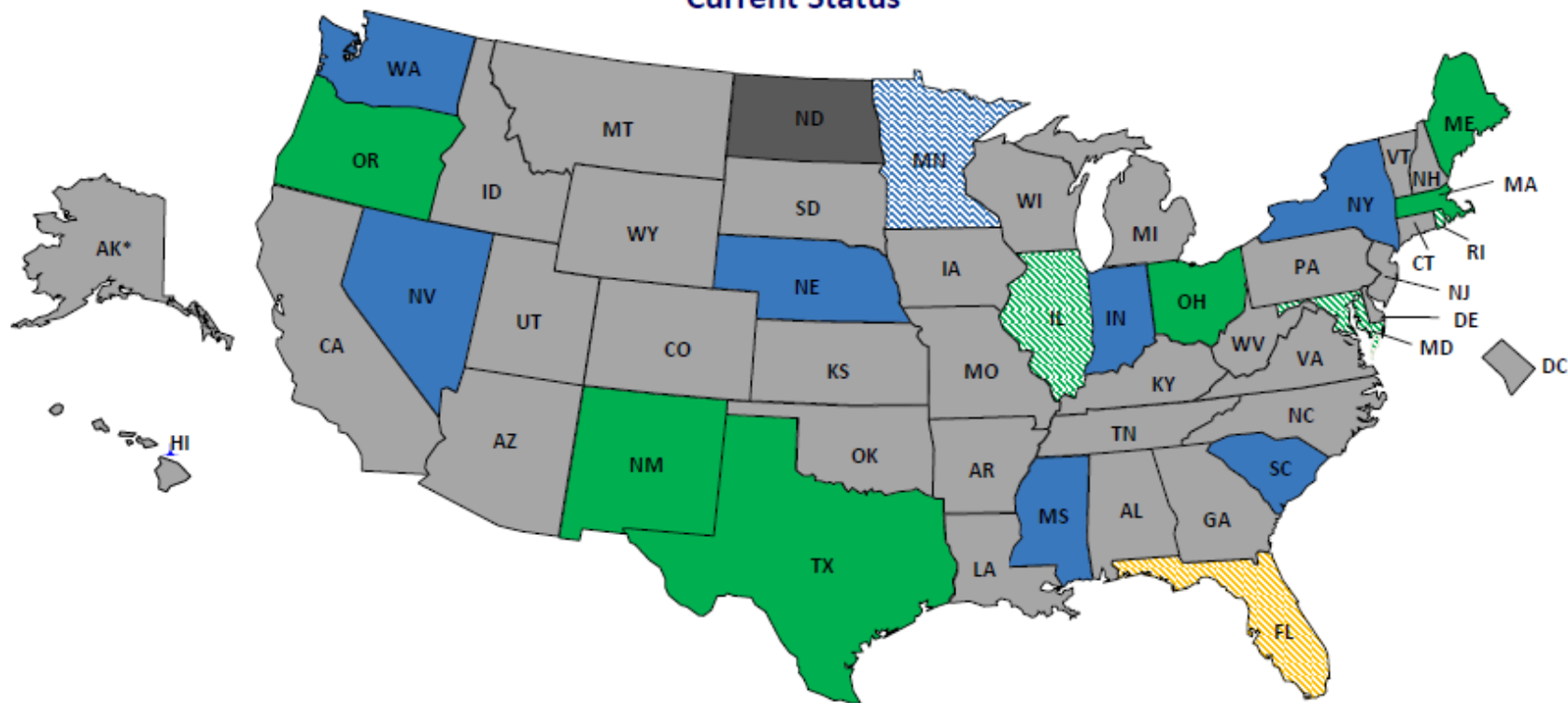
- CHWs:
 - Empowerment for building professional identity
 - Workforce development (pay, benefits, supervision, training, career pathways)
- Providers/employers:
 - Scope of practice in relation to other workforces
 - Training standards
- Public & private insurers:
 - Scope of practice, training
 - Possible prerequisite for payment

Certification underway in multiple states



Community Health Workers (CHWs) Training/Certification Standards

Current Status



Laws/Regulations Establish CHW Certification Program Requirements

Statute Creates a CHW Advisory Board, Taskforce, or Workgroup to Establish Program Requirements

No Law; But Has State-led Training/Certification Program

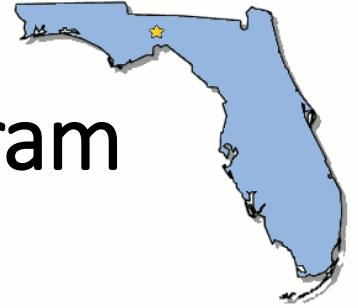
Medicaid Payment for Certified CHW Services

Pending legislation; But has state-led Training/Certification Program

None Legislation Died

* AK does not have a state-run CHW training program, but statutorily provides community health aide grants for third-parties to train community health aides.

Florida's CHW Certification Program



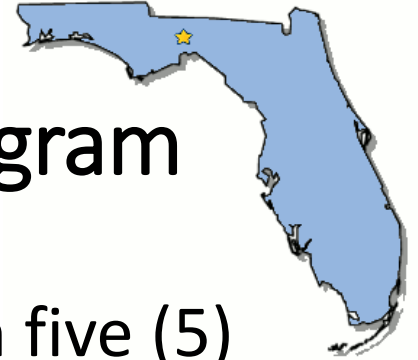
- Voluntary certification program.
- Partnership between the Florida Department of Health, the Florida Certification Board and the Florida Coalition of Community Health Workers.
- Program developed and administered by the FCB, under the guidance of a standing advisory board of CHW subject matter experts.
- Program developed to nationally accepted standards for certification programs (ICE/NCCA).

Florida's CHW Certification Program



- Role Delineation Study, included field validation.
- Validation study conducted in English and Spanish
- Results were the same from both surveys.
- Generated a psychometrically sound, legally defensible scope of service and exam blueprint.

Florida's CHW Certification Program



- 28 core competencies were established in five (5) performance domains:
 - Communication and Education
 - Resources
 - Advocacy
 - Foundations of Health
 - Professional Responsibility
- Competency indicators/certification requirements established for certification application and award.

Florida's CHW Certification Program



Grandparenting	Full Standards
Jan 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016	All applications received after June 30, 2016
No formal education required	HSD/GED or higher required
500 hours of work or volunteer experience providing CHW services	
30 hours of specified training	
Supervisory and Personal/Professional Letter of Recommendation for Certification	
No Test Required	Test Required
Must follow a Code of Ethics & complete 10 CEUs annually	
\$50 application fee/\$100 biennial renewal fee	

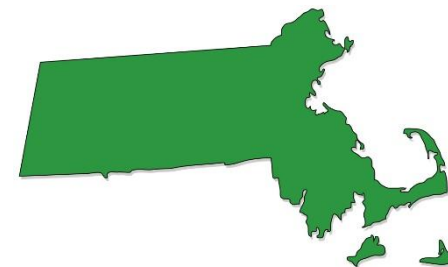
Florida CHW Leadership

- Florida CHW Coalition established 2011
 - > 750 coalition partners
 - Educational programs
 - Leadership development
 - Professional partnerships
 - Workgroups on networking, curriculum, practice, policy, & research
- CHWs helping to lead legislative campaign for CHW certification law
 - Bills filed 2012-2015
 - HB285, SB482



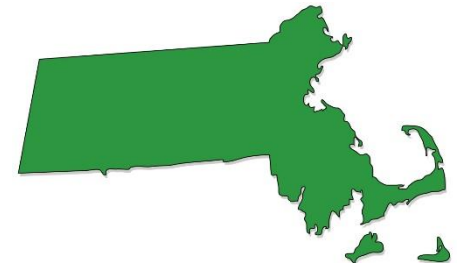
CHW certification in Massachusetts

- Chapter 322 passed in Acts of 2010
- Certification under auspices of state Dept. of Public Health, Division of Health Professions Licensure
- Mass. Board of Certification convened July, 2012
- Regulations pending approval in 2015
- *Voluntary* certification program
- Competency based (10 core competencies)



CHW certification in Massachusetts

- Regulatory provisions:
 - Certification of individual CHWs
 - Approval of CHW training programs
 - Standards for CHW trainers
 - Scope of practice
 - Good Moral Character
 - Option for tiered practice levels
 - Continuing education requirements
 - Reciprocity with other states
 - Discipline, grievance procedures
 - Fees, etc.



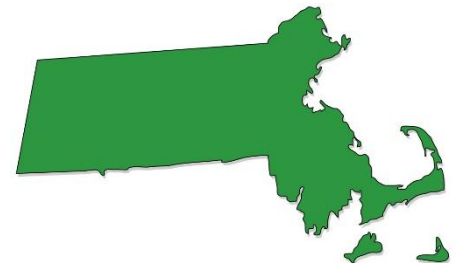
Guiding Principle

“Nothing about us without us!”



CHWs Led at Every Step in Massachusetts

- Massachusetts Association of CHWs (MACHW) active since 2000
- Won 2006 health care reform law requirement for CHW workforce study
- Leadership in state CHW Advisory Council, 2008-009
- Drafted and led fight for 2010 CHW certification law
- Won CHW provisions in 2012 health care reform law
- Leadership in drafting state certification regulations
- Contracts with state DPH to educate CHWs



Certification is still controversial

- Different understandings of what certification means
- Concerns about potential adverse impacts
 - Barriers to entry into workforce
 - Diminishing CHW effectiveness
 - Distorting CHW identity
 - Over-medicalizing CHW practice
 - Diminishing flexibility to respond to complex needs
 - Creating separate “classes” of CHWs





Well-designed certification can anticipate & prevent barriers to entry: **Florida**

- Grandparenting program designed to allow current community health workers to earn certification without having to earn a formal educational degree or pass a written exam.
- All standards allow for a 5-year “look-back” window.
- Eligible training may come from a wide variety of providers.
- Accept both formal and volunteer experience.
- 12-month period from FCB receipt of application/fees to complete all CCHW certification requirements/earn credential.
- Coalition provided certification-related funds/scholarships and technical assistance to applicants, in both English and Spanish.

Well-designed certification can anticipate and prevent barriers to entry:

Massachusetts

Draft regulations pending approval include:

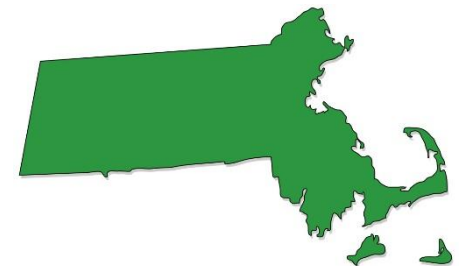
- Two paths for individual certification:
 - Work experience only (4,000 hours over 10 year look-back period during 3 year “grandparenting” period)
 - 80 hour training plus 2,000 hours work experience
 - Recognition of voluntary and part time work experience
- Flexible training program approval standards
- No minimum educational requirements
- English language proficiency not required



Well-designed certification can anticipate and prevent barriers to entry:

Massachusetts

- Competency-based application requires 3 references
 - One former or current supervisor
 - 2 others may include co-worker or professional from another profession
 - Work experience outside US acceptable for some of the references
- No testing required



Certification doesn't *create* the challenges of CHW identity and integration

- Certification helps highlight the challenges
- Continued struggle necessary in multiple arenas
- Opportunities abound
 - “Upstreamist” provider partners
 - Triple Aim health care incentives
 - Expanding body of evidence for CHW impact



Lessons from Florida, Massachusetts, and other states

- CHW leadership is critical at every step!
- Certification is *voluntary* (reject mandatory licensing).
- Certification should be competency based.
- We can prevent barriers to access in legislation and regulations
 - Regulations may help shape market behavior

Lessons from Florida, Massachusetts, and other states

- No guarantee certification will produce anticipated benefits
- Certification is probably a prerequisite for sustainable payment for CHWs in integrated care.
- We are learning from one another.
- APHA CHW Section continues to provide leadership
 - APHA CHW definition used nationally
 - US Dept. of Labor occupational classification
 - 2014 resolution

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