



# **Certified Community Health Worker**

## **Content Outline & Standards 2019**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2019, the Pennsylvania Certification Board (PCB) facilitated a Content Outline with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to define the role of the Community Health Worker. The mechanism for this study was a focus group. This Content Outline describes the important elements required for a competent Community Health Worker.

## PROCESS

The foundation of a valid, reliable and legally defensible professional certification program is the result of a well-constructed Content Outline. PCB appointed a committee of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to provide content expertise. The group was comprised of Community Health Workers who represented a diversity of practice, experience, geographic regions and education. The following is the identified committee of SMEs that participated in the Content Outline:

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS	
Lori Covey	Kenneth Hickey
Lori Deaner	Edoris Lomax
Nathan Ford	Shannon Osborne
Cheryl Garfield	Yendira Rosario
Aisha Glenn	Jamie Santana
Ashlee Harris	Roseann Stewart

*Note: Further demographic information and affidavits of the SMEs are not provided in this report due to the confidential and private nature of these materials. The information is on file at PCB.*

The goal of the Content Outline meeting was to establish task element exclusion criteria to differentiate between the important and unimportant tasks involved in Community Health Worker practice. The approved elements established the link between the tasks necessary to perform a Community Health Worker's job and evaluation of competency. SMEs evaluated which tasks should be included and developed a content outline. The focus of this was to identify tasks performed in current Community Health Worker practice.

In July 2019, the Content Outline developed by the focus group was then sent out via survey to obtain feedback from other Community Health Workers. Respondents were asked to review each task and rate it on a scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The survey was open for approximately three weeks. 193 responses were received. The lowest four tasks received 80% in Agree or Strongly Agree ratings while the rest of the tasks received 90-95% in Agree or Strongly Agree ratings. The survey results validated the Content Outline as appropriate to Community Health Worker practice.

## THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

A Community Health Worker (CHW) is a trusted individual who contributes to improved health outcomes in the community. CHWs serve the communities in which they reside or communities with which they may share ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, or life experiences. The term “community health worker,” includes but is not limited to other titles such as outreach worker, patient navigator and promotores de salud.

A CHW proactively:

- builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy;
- serves as a liaison between communities and health care agencies;
- provides guidance and social assistance to community residents;
- enhances community residents’ ability to effectively communicate with healthcare providers;
- provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health education;
- advocates for individual and community health;
- provides referral and follow-up services or otherwise coordinates care; and
- identifies and helps enroll eligible individuals in federal, state, and local private or nonprofit health and human services programs.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER STANDARDS FOR CERTIFICATION

**Experience:** One (1) year full-time or 2000 hours part-time volunteer or paid work/volunteer experience as a community health worker specific to the domains within the last five (5) years.

**Supervision:** 60 hours of supervision obtained during the work/volunteer experience. The supervision must be specific to all the domains.

**Education/Training\*:**

75 hours relevant to the domains within the last five years

**\*Grandparenting:** A one-year grandparenting period will be established where the requirement of “within the last five years” will be waived.

**Recertification:** 30 education/training hours every two years

## CONTENT OUTLINE

### COMMUNITY HEALTH CONCEPTS

1. Identify medical, social and behavioral health issues and referral sources.
2. Apply critical thinking techniques and problem-solving skills.
3. Knowledge of and understanding about the community served.
4. Knowledge of relevant health issues and their implications and impact on the individual's family and community.
5. Knowledge of health and social service systems.
6. Knowledge of health promotion and coaching skills.
7. Knowledge of data collection.
8. Understand that there are various research materials that can be accessed and utilized.
9. Knowledge of the use of technology for outreach, education, data collection and documentation.
10. Knowledge of basic public health principles.
11. Understand disease processes including prevention, recognition and management of disease.
12. Understand the variety of engagement methods.
13. Engage individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.
14. Collaborate with colleagues to develop and implement forms of engagement.
15. Build trust and rapport with individuals, community members, colleagues, and other professionals.
16. Understand that individual health is shaped by family, community, policy, and social determinants of health.
17. Understand the importance of documentation.
18. Assist individuals to access and stay connected to health or social services through education, skill building, and peer support.

### ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

1. Provide information and support for individuals to overcome barriers and to advocate for themselves.
2. Advocate on behalf of individuals and communities to obtain needed care or resources.
3. Advocate for policy changes as they relate to individual and community needs with stakeholders to transform public awareness, organizational rules, institutional practices, or public policy.
4. Inform health care providers about challenges that limit the ability of individuals to follow care plans and navigate the health care system.
5. Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with community-based organizations and other resources to promote individual services, care, education, and advocacy.
6. Identify and assess the strengths and needs of individuals, communities and/or populations.
7. Work with or on behalf of individuals to understand and exercise their rights.
8. Empower individuals and/or communities through advocacy, education, skill development, and networking.
9. Assist individuals to identify and prioritize their personal, family, and community needs.
10. Assist individuals to identify and gain access to resources to meet their specific needs and goals.
11. Provide information, opportunity, and support for the individual to participate in advocacy.
12. Educate and support individuals, providers and partners to build relationships that lead to better outcomes.

## **CARE COORDINATION**

1. Engage in systematic problem solving, including assessment, information gathering, goal setting, planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision of plans and methods, as necessary, to achieve shared objectives.
2. Work collaboratively with providers, partners and/or teams to ensure continuity of care.
3. Support individuals as they navigate the health care system and institutional/agency services.
4. Provide and/or suggest referral services and follow-up to ensure effective connections to services.
5. Assist individuals in understanding and carrying out their health care providers' advice, while keeping providers informed about barriers that may limit the individual's progress.
6. Assist in developing, implementing and evaluating care plans in cooperation with the individual.
7. Obtain and share knowledge of community resources for health care, social services and additional support services.
8. Support individuals' ability to participate in making decisions about their care.
9. Identify barriers to accessing services.
10. Engage family and/or social support networks to aid health promotion and care coordination.
11. Serve as a liaison between organizations, groups, and individuals.
12. Facilitate communication and effective relations between providers, partners and the individual.

## **HEALTH LITERACY & EDUCATION**

1. Identify, synthesize, and use information to help understand the strengths, challenges, and resources.
2. Identify the level of literacy to teach and coach emphasizing strengths to encourage behavior change and self-care.
3. Access, understand and share reliable information about specific health topics and/or issues most relevant to the individual and communities being served.
4. Recognize and build upon the individual's health goals, strengths, current stage of change, and ability to act upon goals.
5. Provide guidance to empower individuals to understand and address health risks for themselves, their family members and/or their communities.
6. Use information from individual and community assessments to devise health education strategies.
7. Build upon individual strengths and current abilities to assist individuals in achieving their goals.
8. Provide ongoing support and follow-up as necessary to support healthy, positive lifestyles.
9. Engage with and assist individuals to learn about and use resources to improve their health outcomes and well-being.
10. Engage individuals in discussions about health and behavior.
11. Respect individual's experience and their ability to learn, take advantage of resources, and set priorities for changing their own behavior.
12. Understand the ways in which environment and access to social and economic opportunities can affect the health of individuals and communities.

## **SAFETY AND SELF-CARE**

1. Identify risks and safety in various settings.
2. Understand limitations and boundaries around safety.
3. Manage commitment to your organization's mission while promoting the safety of self and others.

4. Learn appropriate strategies to de-escalate potential conflict.
5. Identify potential crisis situations.
6. Communicate effectively during escalation and de-escalation of potential crisis situations in relationship to organization policy.
7. Develop and establish a plan for crisis management.
8. Understand internal and external factors that affect time management.
9. Identify and practice ways to cope with personal and community stressors.
10. Understand limitations and boundaries as they relate to self-care.
11. Promote one's own health and well-being.
12. Advocate for safety training, policy and protocols.

### **CULTURAL COMPETENCY**

1. Use cultural background and life experience in working with individuals while maintaining objectivity and professional behavior.
2. Knowledge of and understand the connection between one's own culture and its impact on work with diverse individuals, communities, and colleagues.
3. Recognize, respect, and understand different aspects of culture, language and identity and how these can influence the thinking, beliefs, and behavior of others.
4. Understand that organizational culture can influence the way services are delivered and the way individuals experience services.
5. Interact sensitively and non-judgmentally with individuals from diverse cultures.
6. Understand one's own cultural bias(es) and practice cultural humility.
7. Identify when individuals need language assistance, translation, and/or interpretation, and know how to obtain these services.
8. Advocate for and promote the use of culturally and linguistically appropriate services and resources.
9. Bridge the gap between providers and partners when working with individuals from diverse cultures.
10. Identify different aspects of community and culture and how these can influence individual's health beliefs and behavior.
11. Use language and behavior that is responsive to the diversity of cultures encountered.

### **COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

1. Practice active, reflective listening and remain solution-oriented in all interactions.
2. Recognize and respond to non-verbal behavior.
3. Use open-ended questions to solicit information and engage the individual.
4. Ability to communicate with individuals in a non-judgmental and appropriate manner.
5. Explain terms and concepts in ways that individuals, community members, and professional colleagues can understand.
6. Ability to communicate at the level of the individual.
7. Address conflicts that may arise in a professional and safe manner.
8. Utilize affirming statements to provide positive reinforcement.
9. Ensure all communication access for all populations, including providing reasonable accommodations required under state or federal law.
10. Facilitate discussions in group settings with individuals, their families, communities, providers and partners.

## **ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROFESSIONALISM**

1. Seek opportunities to increase knowledge and skills through professional development.
2. Seek assistance from supervisors as necessary to address challenges related to work responsibilities.
3. Demonstrate commitment and compliance to ethical principles pertaining to individual rights, confidentiality, informed consent, business practices, and compliance with relevant laws.
4. Understand the scope and boundaries of the role of the community health worker within an organization.
5. Maintain boundaries that balance professional and personal relationships.
6. Demonstrate and employ healthy coping mechanisms and self-care strategies.
7. Understand issues related to accessibility, discrimination, abuse, neglect, and criminal activity that may be reportable or mandatory under law and regulation.
8. Conduct self in an ethical manner by adhering to professional codes of ethics and standards of practice.
9. Address ethical issues as they relate to legal and social challenges facing individuals and communities.
10. Adhere to confidentiality and privacy rights in accordance with employer and legal reporting requirements.
11. Adhere to requirements set by states, the federal government, and/or employing organization.
12. Advocate for supervision, training, continuing education, networking, and other resources for professional development and lifelong learning for self and colleagues.
13. Understand and be familiar with appropriate individual care procedures and forms including those related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and applicable agency materials.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Much of the success of this project is due to the breadth of work that was done in 2016 by the Pennsylvania Community Health Worker Training Taskforce, organized and chaired by Robert Ferguson, Director of Government Grants and Policy for the Jewish Healthcare Foundation. This group developed an extensive list of core competencies that the focus group were able to use as source material during their meeting. PCB thanks them for their excellent work and willingness to share it with us to use during this process.

## **REFERENCES**

Pennsylvania Community Health Worker Training Task Force Core Competencies: 2016

Rhode Island Certification Board Certified Community Health Worker: 2016.

Virginia Certification Board Certified Community Health Worker: 2018