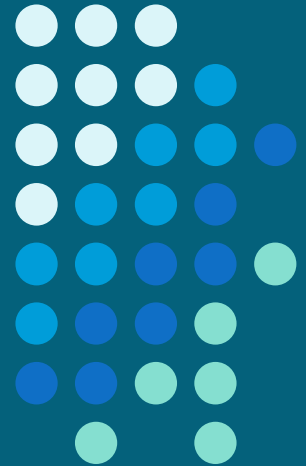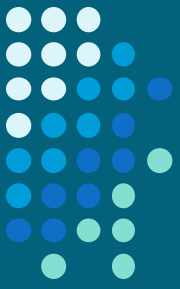# Community Health Workers

Belinda Flores, RN, BS, CHWI 202
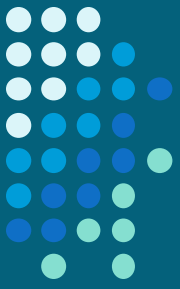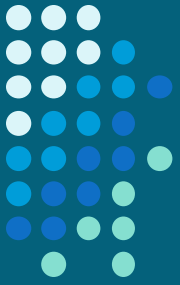Director, South Coastal AHEC

Objectives

- Defining Community Health Worker (CHW)
- Exploring what a CHW does
- Requirements for a Certified CHW
- Responding to a pandemic
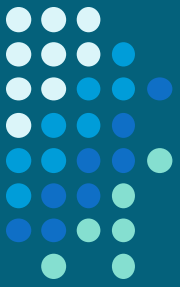- Role of the CHW

Community Health Worker

- A person who, with or without compensation is a connection and provides cultural facilitation between health care and social services, and the community. A promotor(a) or community health worker: is a trusted member of the community, and has a close understanding of, the ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, and life experiences of the community served.

- A promotor(a) or community health worker assists people to gain access to needed services and builds individual, community, and system capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, patient navigation and follow-up, community health education and information, informal counseling, social support, advocacy, and participation in clinical research.
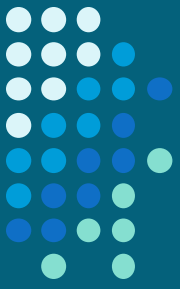
Different types of CHWs

CHW is not a new concept

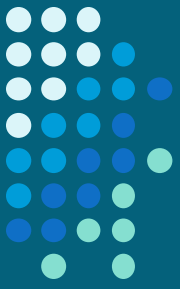- The World Health Organization estimates there are over 1.3 million community health workers worldwide

- The identification or title is new

- Certification is new

- Specific trainings are new
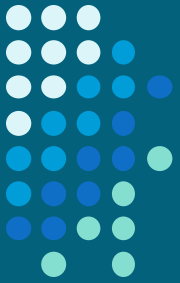
CHW's at work worldwide

- India: mental health, HIV
- Mexico: HPV, STDs, Birth control, Prevention
- Mali: Decreased child mortality
- Latin America: Asthma
- US: Community and family members that work at the health care advisors
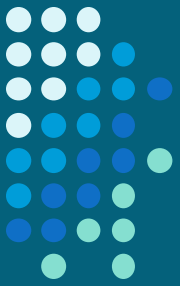
State CHW Requirements:

- **Section IV. (1) Application based on completion of DSHS Certified Training** - Fill out this section if you completed a DSHS approved CHW certification course of at least 160 hours. <u>Include a copy of the training course certificate of completion with your application.</u>
- <u>OR</u>
  - **Section IV. (2) Application based on Experience**
  - Fill out this section if you have <u>not</u> completed a DSHS approved CHW certification course of at least 160 hours <u>and</u> have performed at least 1,000 hours of community health work services in the previous six years.
  - List your community health work experience (volunteer or paid) in the previous six years.
  - DSHS will verify your community health work experience with the supervisory contacts listed on your application.
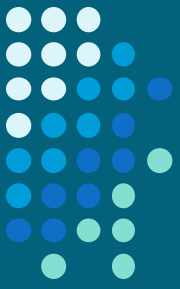
8 Competency Areas

Competency Areas/Áreas de Competencia

- Communication Skills
  - Listening
  - Use language confidently and appropriately
- Ability to read and write well enough to document
    Activities

- Interpersonal Skills
  - Counseling
  - Relationship-building
  - Ability to work as a team member
- Ability to work appropriately with diverse groups of
    People

- Service Coordination Skills
  - Ability to identify and access resources
  - Ability to network and build coalitions
  - Ability to provide follow-up

- Capacity-Building Skills
  - "Empowerment "☐Ability to identify problems and resources to help clients solve problems themselves
  - Leadership
  - Ability to strategize
- Ability to motivate

- Advocacy Skills
  - Ability to speak up for individuals or communities and withstand intimidation
  - Ability to use language appropriately
- Ability to overcome barriers

- Teaching Skills
  - Ability to share information one-on-one
  - Ability to master information, plan and lead classes, and collect and use information from community people

- Organizational Skills
  - Ability to set goals and plan
  - Ability to juggle priorities and manage time

- Knowledge Base on Specific Health Issues
  - Broad knowledge about the community
  - Knowledge about specific health issues
  - Knowledge of health and social service systems
  - Ability to find information

- Habilidad de Comunicación
  - Escuchar
  - Usa lenguaje apropiado y con confianza
  - Habilidad para leer y escribir bien como para documentar actividades

- Habilidad de Relaciones Interpersonales
  - Consejería
  - Construir relaciones
  - Habilidad para trabajar como miembro de un equipo
  - Habilidad para trabajar apropiadamente con diversos grupos de personas

- Habilidad para Coordinar Servicios
  - Habilidad para identificar y accesar los recursos
  - Habilidad para formar coaliciones y redes de trabajo
  - Habilidad para hacer seguimiento

- Habilidad para Desarrollar la Capacidad de la Comunidad
  - "Enpowerment" – Habilidad para identificar problemas y recursos para ayudar a los clientes a resolver sus problemas ellos mismos
  - Liderazgo
  - Habilidad para realizar estrategias
  - Habilidad para motivar

- Habilidad para Interceder a Favor de Familias y Comunidades
  - Habilidad para hablar en favor de indivíduos o comunidades y resistirse a las intimidaciones
  - Habilidad para usar lenguaje apropiadamente
  - Habilidad para ssuperar los obstáculos

- Habilidad para Enseñar
  - Habilidad para compartir información de uno a uno
  - Habilidad para manejar información, planear y dirigir clases, colectar y usar información de la gente de la comunidad

- Habilidad para Organizar
  - Habilidad para planear y establecer metas
  - Habilidad para establecer prioridades y manejar el tiempo

- Conocimiento Base en Temas Específicos de Salud
  - Amplio conocimiento sobre la Comunidad
  - Conocimiento sobre temas específicos de salud
  - Conocimiento sobre sistemas de salud y servicios sociales
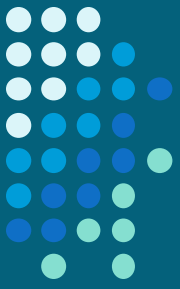 - Habilidad para encontrar información

Texas CHW Certification

- State will send you a certificate and badge with picture

- Initial certification is good for 2 years

- State will email you when it's time to renew

- During your 2 years of certification you will need to complete 20 hours of CE (Continuing education courses to renew)

- Employment

Why are CHW important?

- TRUSTED
- Shortage of healthcare providers
- Working poor can not afford insurance
- Can impact their community
- Are committed to making a difference
- They are the movers and shakers in their community

Pandemic – COVID19

- Fear
- Masks
- Vaccines
- Trust Issues
- Information Overload
- Out of control
- Freedom
- Death

CHWs Instrumental in Pandemics

Examples of How CHWs Have Prevented, Detected, and Responded to Pandemics

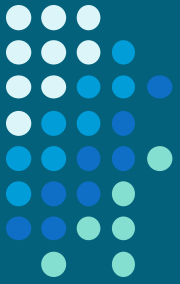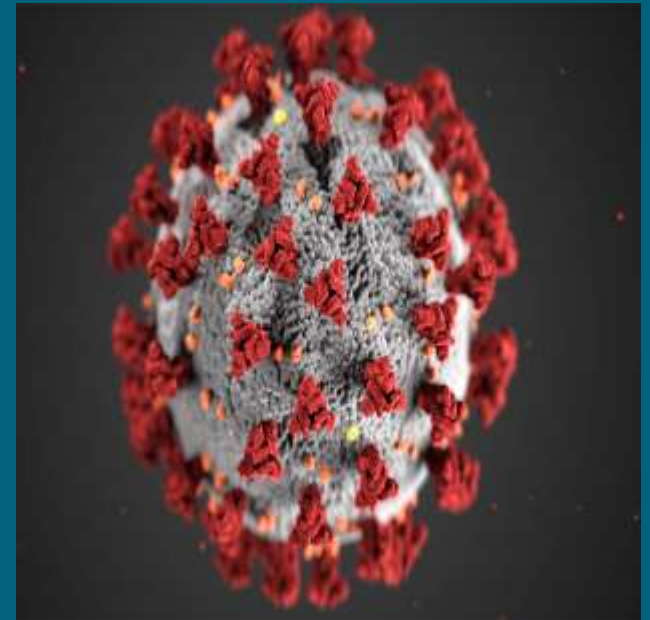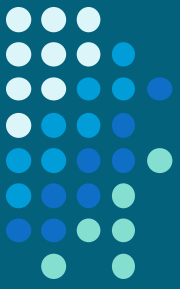| Intervention	Example[a]
Educate communities regarding signs, symptoms, and transmission routes. Lead skill building for personal preventive measures such as social distancing, hand hygiene, coughing/sneezing into elbows, and water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions. Address public health misinformation as trusted messengers during in-person interactions.	**DRC, Liberia:** During the 2014–2016 Ebola epidemic, CHWs were part of the interdisciplinary teams of nurses, doctors, and other health workers who played a critical role in reducing transmission through promoting social distancing and other infection prevention and control measures.[3] **Global:** By April 2020, CHWs reached 2.5 million households across 27 countries as part of countries' national strategies during the COVID-19 epidemic.[4]
Supply: Support, lead, or reinforce community and facility-based infection prevention and control measures, such as construction of triage areas, use of personal protective equipment (e.g., face masks and gloves), and creation of hand hygiene stations.[5] Distribute PPE to the community.	**Cote d'Ivoire** employed CHWs during the 2014–2016 Ebola epidemic for disease prevention and control as did **Liberia, Sierra Leone, and DRC**.[6]

COVID-19

- COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

- The virus causing COVID-19 is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

- The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about COVID-19. Protect yourself and others from infection by following the recommended guidelines for prevention of the CDC and other reliable sources.
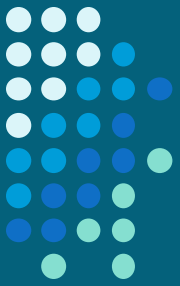

Coronavirus. (2021). https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

Things we had to learn quickly:

- COVID
- Pandemic
- Vaccines
- Contact Tracing
- Isolation
- Virtual
- Quarantine
- Hestitency
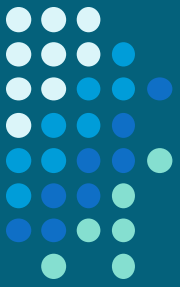- Death

Role of the CHW/Promotora

- **-Provide support to community members**
  Be the ear that listens to others during their lonely time of social estrangement

- **-Promoting everyday preventive actions as the main strategy to prevent COVID 19 in a language they understand.**

- **-Provide information to break down myths and rumors**
  Reinforce public health messages about COVID-19

- **-Identify populations at risk**
  Help organize food delivery, utility assistance, advocate with landlords, find resources

- **-Refer clients to additional services**

- **-Explain changing rules and facilitate enrollment for social benefits and resources in the community**
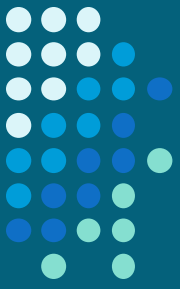

Smith, D. O., & Barbero, C. (2020, May 4). *What you need to know about COVID-19 and the role of community health workers in the Latino community.*

CHW Essential to Healthcare

- Healthcare Team:
    - CHW are the connection between providers and clients.
    - Explain the instructions patients are given
    - Find resources
- Community
    - Advocates
    - Educate
    - Empower
    - Stand in the gap

References:

- www.dshs.state.tx.us

- https://stahec.uthscsa.edu/

- www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9053152/

- https://stahec.uthscsa.edu/