



# Community Health Worker Training Program for High School Students

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## Executive Summary

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According to the American Public Health Association, Community Health Workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables CHWs to serve as a liaison, link or intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. CHWs also build 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.<sup>1</sup>

During the summer of 2016, Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) piloted an innovative High School Community Health Worker Training Program. The thought was that high school students could provide vital health information to the underserved community and school population. During the pilot, MSM trained 13 High school students from 4 metro-Atlanta High Schools (Tri-Cities, McClarin, Washington, KIPP Collegiate) Students are ages 15-18, rising sophomores-2016 graduates. **This is the 1<sup>st</sup> High School Community Health Worker training program in the country to be implemented.** The pilot program has achieved great preliminary outcomes and the program model is highly sought after by Universities and Community-based Organizations.

MSM has trained Community Health Workers/promotores/lay navigators for more than 10 years. The initial MSM training curriculum was developed in collaboration with the American Cancer Society/Southeast region and the Georgia Department of Public Health. To date, MSM has trained more than 350 CHWs to work in a variety of settings (community, clinics, academia, etc.) and in many healthcare areas, e.g., diabetes, cancer control, reducing Emergency Room visits from “frequent flyers”, and increasing the number of children and adults with insurance.

The Objectives of the HS training program are to:

- Increase the number of trained student community health workers to assist with community health programs in underserved communities
- Provide a health careers pipeline program and mentorship for underserved students
- Support & Promote the community Health worker field
- Promote health education and health literacy in schools and community
- Assist trained HS CHWs with the design and implementation of school-based and community-based health initiatives
- Provide health monitoring and health literacy activities to students’ family members and community members

The MSM Community Health Worker Training is 210 hours - three weeks (150 hours) of classroom instruction with core competencies/skills, followed by 150 hours of field instruction and additional hours of continuing education. Continuing education will be monthly over 12 months and will be both new information and/or reinforcement of previous instruction (teleconferences, face-to-face instruction, workshops, etc.).

### Core Competencies

By the end of the program, CHW’s will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following core competency areas:

#### 1. Introduction to Community Health Work

- a. **The Role of the CHW** includes discussion of the CHW in Health Promotion, the Healthcare Continuum.
- b. **Organizational Skills** include the ability to set goals, to develop an action plan, and to manage time wisely.
- c. **Capacity Building Skills** include empowerment skills and leadership skills.
- d. **Leadership Skills** include the ability to set and achieve goals, the ability to motivate others, and the ability to delegate. Some characteristics include honesty, creativity, and courage.
- e. **Self-care skills** include managing stress, health, and personal life balance.

## 2. Communications & Ethics

- a. **Communication Skills** in including the ability to listen and speak the language of the community being served, motivational interviewing.
- b. **Interpersonal Skills** include friendliness, counseling, and relationships skills.
- c. **Teaching Skills** include the ability to share information one-on-one and the ability to conduct a class or presentation.
- d. **Ethical Considerations** include issues in privacy, confidentiality, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and related regulations.

## 3. Health & Health Disparities

- a. **Health Knowledge Skills** include concepts in health and healing, disparities, specific disease areas, behavioral/mental health interventions to care and knowledge of health and social service systems.
- b. **Cultural Competency skills** include the respect, knowledge of and sensitivity to behaviors and knowledge of all populations.
- c. **Advocacy Skills** include the ability to overcome barriers and the ability to speak up for communities and to withstand intimidation.

## 4. Care Management & Coordination

- a. **Care Management skills** include vital signs, blood pressure measurement, diabetes interactions, basic CPR certification, conducting home visits, HIPAA certificate, data technology, all forms/protocol, etc.
- b. **Service coordination Skills** include the ability to identify and access resources, the ability to coordinate patient care, and the ability to make referrals. (includes patient insurance navigation)
- c. **Data management skills** include citi certificate, electronic health records, data collection, data entry, the use of mobile devices, use of epi-info and data analytics.

## 5. Community Engagement & Supports

- a. **Community engagement skills** include community history, community culture, coalition–building, community organizing and working with Community advisory boards.
- b. **Community support skills** include linkages to community services and supports.
- c. **Community safety skills** include personal safety, safety protocols.

### Community/School-based Health Projects

During the summer training, students work in groups to brainstorm and develop a community and/or school-based health project to be implemented during the school year in conjunction with local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and school partners. During the monthly sessions, students receive training in Human-centered Design Principles (IDEO.com). The student groups are guided through the Inspiration, Ideation and Implementation phases as well as sustainability planning. The students are supported through the project implementation and are assisted with report writing.

## Family/Community Health Monitoring

In addition, there is a family/community health monitoring component. The HS CHWs are the "Chief Medical Officer (CMO)" of their family. They are the "First line of defense" responsible for collecting and monitoring the patient's (family members) vital signs, compliance with physicians' orders, and encouraging the patient to sustain his/her wellness.

Multiple stakeholders benefit from the program ranging from the family, with improved overall health; insurers with less member emergency room visits and hospital stays; providers with less re-admissions because of non-compliance; to the trained students prepared for a career in the health sector.

## Program Expansion 2017

We are expanding this program by training an additional 40 high school students in the summer of 2017. We will add two additional high school partners as well as a rural Georgia program. The 2017-18 program will begin on July 5, 2017. The following are included in the program:

- Instruction & materials
  - Classroom & field training
  - Continuing education (Monthly & quarterly)
  - 3 CHW textbooks, Info binder, access to Learning Management System (Blackboard)
- Equipment
  - A tablet, Blood Pressure monitoring equipment, a portable scale,
- Polo Shirt, Book bag
- Marta Cards (transportation), training stipend
- CPR certification, competency exam
- Job training & placement assistance (for HS Graduates)
- On-going community/school projects
- CHW training completion certificate

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<sup>i</sup> Community Health Workers Section, American Public Health Association. Available at: <http://www.apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/community-health-workers>