

Southeast CHW Network Learning Collaborative Minutes

August 15th, 2022

1:00-2:30 pm EST/ 12:00-1:30 am CST

Meeting Recording: <https://youtu.be/c4z83FERIUg>

1. Welcome and instructions for chat box introductions (Name, state, CHW or ally)

Please be sure to share Name, State, CHW or Ally in the chat at the beginning of our meetings. This helps assist in reporting accurate attendance numbers about our network reach.

Attendance by State	Number of Participants
Alabama	2
Florida	1
Georgia	2
Kentucky	2
North Carolina	3
South Carolina	5
Tennessee	4
Virginia	1
No State Indicated/Outside SE Network	1
Total	20

*Attendance counts by state collected according to chat introductions; total attendance was **30**.

2. Supporting Community Health Workers through Effective Supervision

- Pre-Presentation Survey Highlights: We had an almost even mix of CHWs and allies. Many attendees did not currently serve in a supervisory role.
- **Nikayla Boyd**, Executive Director TNCHWA; **Barbara Clinton**, MSW, Public Health Consultant; **Tonya Elkins**, LAPSW, CLC, IMH-E® MIHOW Director
 - **Integrating CHW into Your Organization – A toolkit for Hiring and Training**
 - **Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker Program (MIHOW)** – a home visiting program that provides education and support for parents. The CHWs come along parents to help them access support. Many of the patients have limited access to their providers (rural) or barriers (language). The focus is a strength-based approach with the relationship at the center. The role of the supervisor is to guide and model the process. Many experienced CHWs were moved into supervisory roles, but they had not received any formal training during the transition. This was how the need for this toolkit was developed followed by a year long community of practice.
 - **What are qualities of your best supervisor?** Caring, trustworthy, approachable, collaborative, cares about me, honest, supportive, fair, open minded, someone who takes their time, communicator. Many of these relate directly to the strategies that will be discussed.

- **Creating a workplace culture** – Gallup did an international study that found that workers reported the highest engagement when workers indicated their supervisors cared about them. Google has multi-year studies that found managers were key to turnover and job satisfaction and the most important factor was making employees feel psychologically safe (you can make mistakes and not be fired). Pew Research Center with the great resignation study found that low pay, lack of opportunities, and feeling disrespected at work were some of the top reasons for leaving their jobs. A struggle within the CHW field is that there may be a lack of competitive pay and advancement opportunities. Supervisors can play a huge role in making sure CHWs feel respected and valued.
- **Creating a workplace culture** – supervisors can play an important part in creating a safe base for their CHWs that are often out in the field. They have a secure base to come back and process the challenges and difficulties they face.
 - **Trust and vulnerability:** Often supervisors of CHWs are learning a lot from their employees. This can help create trust, but it can also make supervisors feel vulnerable if they don't feel they understand the populations being served by the CHWs. There may even be language barriers. This really pushes the supervisor to be vulnerable and in a learning space to build trust.
 - **Equity and social justice:** There is often a power dynamic in many institutions, but this is not the case for CHWs. Supervisors must make sure to maintain equity and social justice and ensure their CHWs voices are heard and supported.
 - **Advocacy:** Supervisors should help CHWs learn how to share their voice and advocate for them. Champion for their CHWs and explain the impact they are having. Lots of explanations may be needed on both the supervisor and CHW end.
- Group feedback on creating CHW workplace culture: struggles at the supervisors level due to a disconnect in communication and the lack of knowledge regarding the role of a CHW. Especially seen in larger organizations that have many levels – may have a wonderful and supportive supervisor, but legal and higher levels do not understand the role of a CHW. The overall goal of the employer must be taken into consideration when thinking about how certain things are addressed. But many participants indicated how we must bring more attention to defining and understanding the CHW role as state associations, allies, CHWs.
- **Making a genuine connection:** getting to know them – must go beyond the transactional approach, learning what motivates and how to support their work. Leading with cultural humility and emotional intelligence, often CHWs are from the same population they are working with so empathy & being open and honest is so important. Ensuring

that leaders are understanding and appreciating their work. If the supervisor can't understand clearly what the CHWs are doing how can they be expected to evaluate and motivate?

- Maintaining Motivation – when people feel valued, they are motivated to stay. When they have a strong purpose in their work, they are more likely to stay, and supervisors can have a huge role in bringing value to their work. Creating Professional Boundaries – if the supervisor does not understand the CHW they can not help them navigate these boundary challenges. Conducting meetings – should be frequent and regular at the beginning. Supervising a CHW should always be looked at as a quality improvement process – the supervisor and CHW are working together to meet goals.
- Case Study (scenario is outlined in the PowerPoint Slides) Highlights:
 - How assumptions can be made when regular meetings do not take place. This could be resolved through regular meetings and open communication.
 - Stressed the importance of collaboration and addressing issues in a timely manner.
 - Group check-ins so a system is in place that makes the process easier.
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- Post-Presentation Survey Highlights: Participants appreciated the case study and learn a great deal from each other in the breakout session.

3. Interactive Grantee Updates and Feedback

- **Alabama – Tuskegee Macon County Community Foundation (TMCC):** Present at meeting, but due to time constraints was not able to give update.
- **Mississippi Community Health Worker Association (MSCHWA):** In August MSCHWA received their funding. Their monthly meeting was postponed due to the flooding in Jackson. Moving forward the plan is to have two meetings for the month of September to wrap up topics on program planning/strategic planning (pt.2) and training for conflict resolution in the community. MSCHWA has also reached out to their finance team and is planning to purchase the software for QuickBooks.
- **North Carolina Community Health Worker Association (NCCHWA):** NCCHWA is currently developing a plan with their consultant. The consultant is putting together some recommendations for our next steps (a board retreat) where we will convene and start the process of building our strategic plan.
- **South Carolina Community Health Worker Association (SCCHWA):** SCCHWA is continuing to work with the committee to finalize sessions for CHWs and the facilitators for their upcoming conference. The location is secured. The Conference Committee is now meeting weekly to finalize the other details of the conference.
- **Tennessee Community Health Worker Association (TNCHWA):** TNCHWA hosted a third meeting with the education committee of community health workers, community organizations, academic and healthcare institutions, and other stakeholders to design the first draft of TN CHW competencies and skills.

- Our next steps include determining other entities that need to be a part of the competency review process and how the state of Tennessee will officially adopt the competencies. (Objective 1)
- The supervision toolkit is still in the pilot phase. We are collecting information and feedback to create the final product for distribution. (Objective 2)
- We will host statewide trainings from September through October, where we will pilot our newly designed professional development evaluation tool. Once we have a final tool, we will offer it to CHW programs for implementation. (Objective 3)
- We are developing and presenting a bi-weekly series of consultations for introducing new programs to CHW work (Objective 4)

4. Upcoming Meetings

- **Storytelling** - October 17th, 2022: 1:00-2:30 pm EST
- **Sustainability and Funding** - November 21st, 2022: 1:00-2:30 pm EST
- **Advocacy Policy or Strategic Partnering** - December 19th, 2022: 1:00-2:30 pm EST