

“Community health workers bring value and deserve to be valued too:” Key considerations in improving CHW career advancement opportunities

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Thank
you!

Contributors

- All the CHWs who participated in interviews and shared their ideas and opinions on this topic
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- CHW Best Practices Council and expertise: Yajaira Benet-Uzcategui, Marek Calhoun, Bonita Clemons, Nora Curiel, Whitney Davis, Barb Dendy, Vanessa Earle, Ashley Ford, William Garrett, Andrea Heyward, Cartia Higgins, Kim Jay, Terri Jowers, Renee Linyard-Gary, Donna Mack, Maria Martin, Reeshemah McKelvey, Chief Michelle Mitchum, Agner Muñoz, Rebekah Shilling, Virginia Berry White and LaSheba Boyd.
- The South Carolina CHW Credentialing Council and Baylor Scott & White Health for sharing their career advancement models

CHW Career Pathways-Why?

- During the past 20 years professional institutions have increasingly **recognized our roles and value** in addressing health needs and gaps.
- In 2010, the US Department of Labor created a “**Standard Occupational Classification**” for CHWs, 21-1094
- **The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act mentioned CHWs 14 times**, identified CHWs as a health care profession, and called for funding allocation for health promotion among underserved populations.
- The **American Rescue Plan** is awarding over 220 million dollars toward the Community Health Worker training and capacity building nationwide
- As frontline public health workers during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, CHWs played critical roles

However...

Major challenge to long-term work and impact:
the lack of career advancement

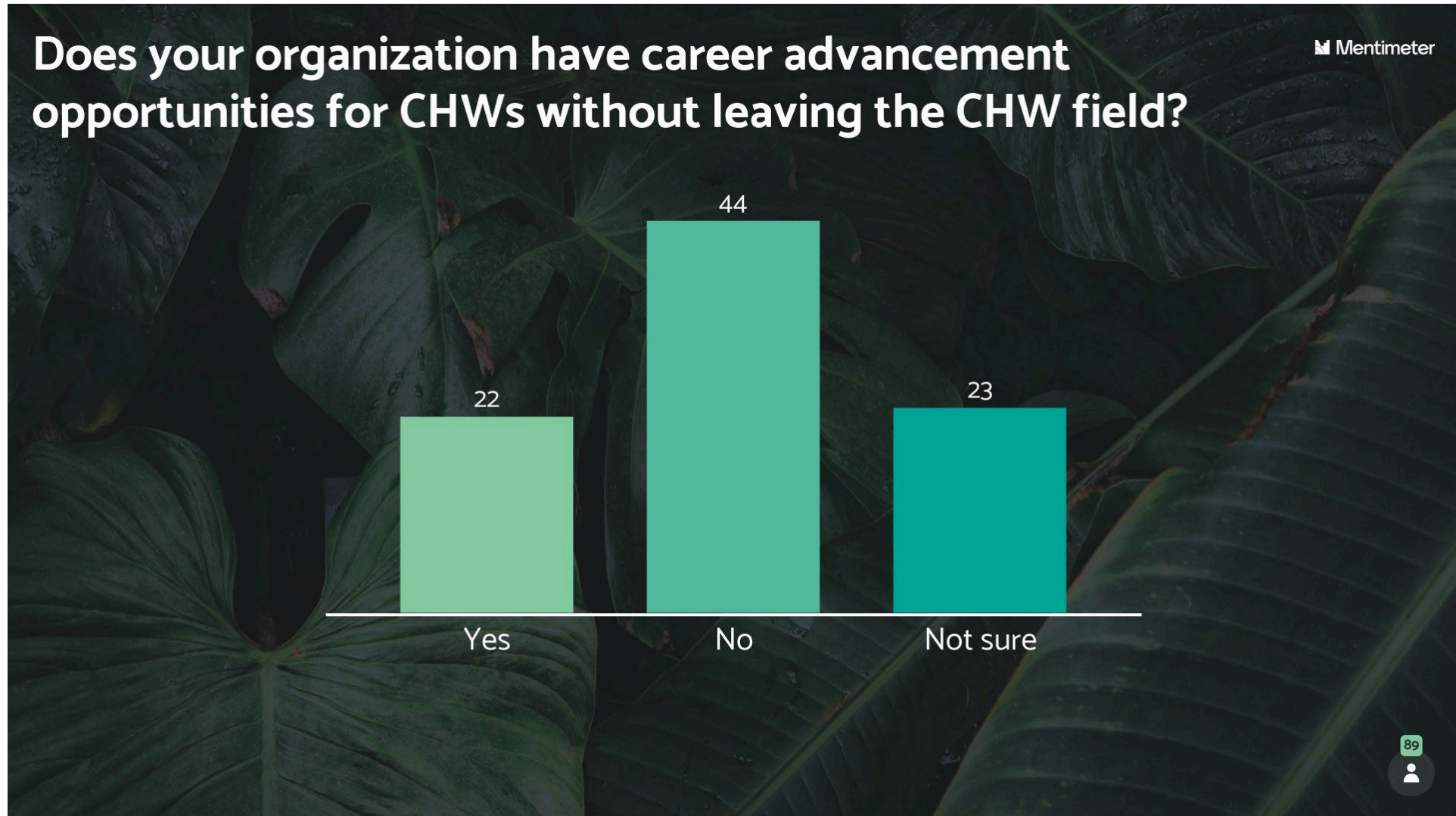
The lived experience of CHWs is often prioritized
in the identification and hiring of CHWs

However, formal education is often prioritized in
hiring

Result=low salaries and status in the workplace, and few
opportunities for professional growth

This leads to attrition, job dissatisfaction and higher
economic and social vulnerability

Menti polling at 2021 Unity Conference



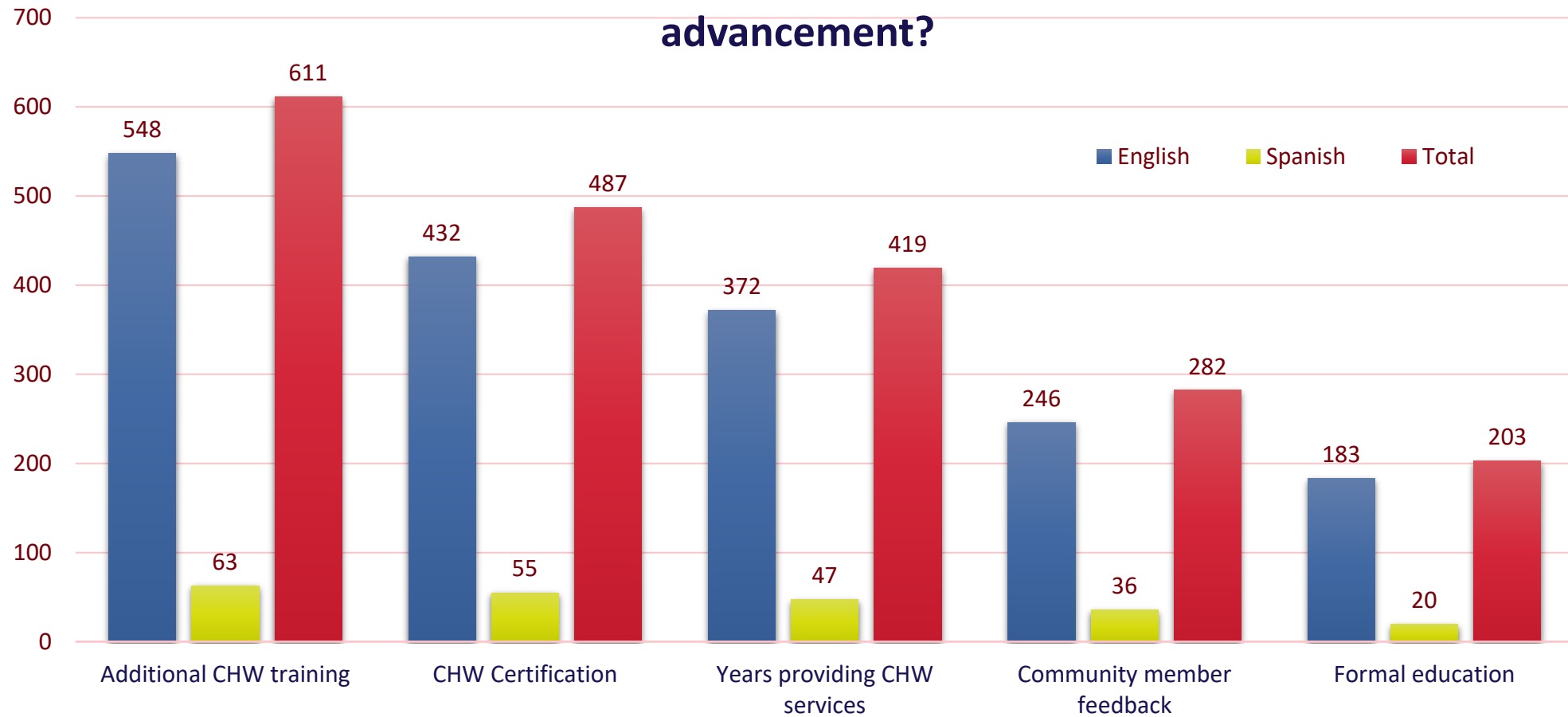
Quotes: Why career pathways are important for CHWs

“It's just I have been advocating for my team to get a better salary, but it is very hard for us to get the resources. ... I really would like to have more for my Community Health Workers because they work so hard. And they really deserve to have a better salary.”

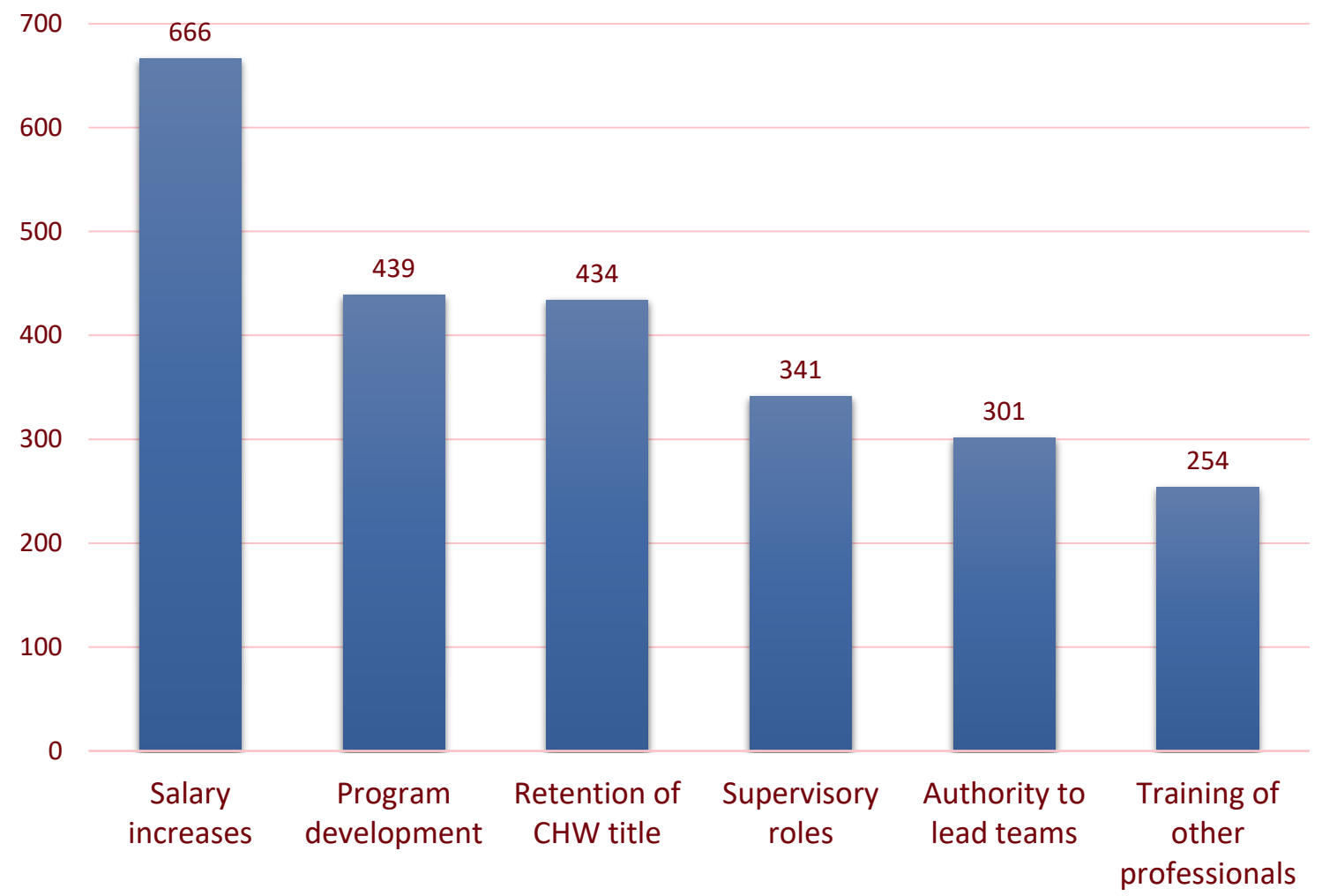
“Having more options for career advancement generally means more people staying in the field, only becoming better at what they do, with the pay they deserve, helping as much people as they can.”

“CHWs are often one paycheck away from needing the services we provide.”

What three factors should be considered most for CHW career advancement?



Top 3 options that should be included in CHW career pathway



What additional benefits should be available to CHWs as we advance within our roles?

68

More pay

43

Opportunity to supervise

25

More responsibilities

65

More professional development

47

Management opportunities

37

Freedom to operate more independently

36

Speaking opportunities

7

Other (please write in chat)

What should employers focus on when hiring CHWs?

“Respecting experience and not just the letters after your name”

“Experience in the field and the resources we bring... how we are respected in the community”



Critical pieces of the puzzle

Sustainable funding: All stakeholders, including funders, employers, allies and CHWs should advocate and work to create **policy for sustainable (not short-term) financing mechanisms for CHW salaries.** Many respondents reported that their CHWs are grant funded, which are time limited and often underpaid, and pose a substantial risk to the workforce.

CHW awareness: There needs to be additional **awareness built on the CHW profession among and for clinical professionals, funders and the communities served by CHWs.** Some ideas were to build education around CHWs into medical and nursing school curricula and establish high-school CHW tracks so young people can grow into the field.

Case
example:
Baylor, Scott
& White
Health

CHW Positions	
Position	General Description
CHW in-training	Embedded community member that has the desired experience and knowledge of their community but does not necessarily have the required Texas Department of Health Services CHW certification; they are required to complete certification training within one year of employment.
CHW I	Experienced CHW, with current DSHS certification
CHW II	Experienced CHW, with current DSHS certification, that may have taken a team lead role and/or have applicable experience
CHW Supervisor	Experienced, “veteran” CHW, with current certification, who has the capacity to manage a team
CHW Manager	Experienced CHW that supports multiple care settings, may directly oversee CHW staff, and may serve at a system level in a project management capacity to support and drive CHW initiatives

South Carolina CHW Credentialing Council

CHW Positions	
Position	General Description
Certified Community Health Worker, CCHW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of a SCCHWCC approved CHW Core Competency Curriculum: 80 hours classroom, 80 hours practicum, SCCHW Examination • Registering on the South Carolina Community Health Worker Association (SCCHWA) CHW Portal
Certified Community Health Worker II, CCHW II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 4 Years working in the field • Bi-Annual Recertification (24 hours every two years) • Certification of Completion of a minimum of 4 CHW Specialty Tracks • Demonstration of at least one year in CHW leadership (CHW ambassador, SCCHWA board, active involvement in SCCHWA workgroup, active involvement in CHW regional or national committee or initiative, CHW Preceptor, CHW supervisor, CHW program leadership or program development at organizational level) • Updated profile on the SCCHWA CHW Portal • Application submission
Certified Community Health Worker III, CCHW III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 8 Years working in the field • Bi-Annual Recertification (24 hours every two years) • Certification of Completion of a minimum of 6 CHW Specialty Tracks • Demonstration of at least two years in CHW leadership (CHW ambassador, SCCHWA board, active involvement in SCCHWA workgroup, active involvement in CHW regional or national committee or initiative, CHW Preceptor, CHW supervisor, CHW program leadership or program development at organizational level) • Updated profile on the SCCHWA CHW Portal • Application submission



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