



Designing and Implementing an HIV Community Health Worker Advisory Group: *An EHE Initiative in Massachusetts*

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2022 National Ryan White Conference on HIV Care & Treatment

Introductions

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- Todd Foy (he/him/his) – Communicable Disease Prevention Program (CDPP) Manager, Codman Square Health Center, Boston, MA

Disclosures

Kristin Moccia, Amanda Hart, and Todd Foy have no relevant financial interests to disclose.

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, the participant will be able to:

1. Define the critical role CHWs play in advancing access to care and improving population health outcomes for at risk populations and PLWH.
2. Identify the program design elements including recruitment and application process, as well as the implementation of an HIV CHW Advisory Group.
3. Assess opportunities for innovative utilization of a CHW Advisory Group to better understand workforce development challenges and inform HIV/AIDS prevention and care service delivery.

Historical Context



Existing CHW Supports

- Many organizations have been working to advance the CHW profession
- The National Association of CHWs (NACHW) is the most prominent
- Many states' state and local health departments have prioritized CHW certification programs.
- Other states moving towards allowing CHW services to be Medicaid-eligible

Massachusetts-Specific Work

- State began exploring CHW certification statewide in 2006 and started offering in 2012
- Organizations like the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW) and the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers (Mass League) have prioritized CHW trainings and advocacy in recent years
- COVID-19 highlighted the versatility and capabilities of CHWs even further

The Identified Gaps

- The life-saving work of the CHWs continued to go unnoticed
- No formal career paths
- Massive workforce attrition
- Influx of EHE dollars without a clear feedback loop

Our Response

- NEAETC began development of the Suffolk County HIV CHW Advisory Group in September 2020 with the following main goals:
 - Create a safe and supportive atmosphere for HIV CHW's working in HIV treatment and prevention to share best practices and challenges.
 - Provide robust Peer-to-Peer networking for HIV CHW's across Suffolk County to create more career pathways.
 - Lift the experiences of CHW's who are members of and/or working with vulnerable communities highly at-risk for HIV
 - Ensure that CHW's are actively engaged in the goals of the EHE Plan and given opportunities to offer feedback as it progresses

The Framework

- The Group was proposed to consist of 22 CHWs serving 12-month terms
- Eligible CHW's were considered *“Any individual currently serving in a non-clinical role at a Community Health Center or other Community-Based Non-Profit working to coordinate and provide care to individuals at-risk for or living with HIV in Suffolk County.”*
- No entity, CHC or otherwise, was permitted to have more than 3 representatives to the Group
- NEAETC committed itself to a group that actively reflects and relies on people most-affected by HIV
- All Group members should be compensated for their time and attend a minimum of 6 meetings across their 12-month term.

Partners & Thought Leaders

- NEAETC was only able to complete this project through significant collaboration with external partners
- These partners included:
 - ✓ Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)
 - ✓ The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)
 - ✓ AccessHealth MA (formerly Community Research Initiative of New England)
 - ✓ Justice Resource Institute
 - ✓ Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers
- The expertise of these organizations and many others made this project possible
- Their continued involvement along with others have been paramount to ongoing success.

Group Implementation

Stakeholder Engagement



Recruitment: Target Participants

Who are Community Health Workers?



- Providing HIV treatment/ prevention services in Suffolk County
- Strong belief in the CHW role as part of the HIV care team
- Active community engagement
- Knowledge/awareness of the role of social determinants of health
- Individuals identifying as BIPOC or LGBTQIA+ encouraged to apply

Recruitment: Marketing Strategy

Fighting to end HIV in your community? ✓

✓ **Do you have work experience with or identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA+?**

Want to improve the community health worker experience? ✓

We Need You!

NEAETC is now seeking applicants to serve on the newly formed **Suffolk County HIV Community Health Worker (CHW) Advisory Group** beginning January 2021!

Click [here](#) for information about the goals of the group and member responsibilities.

If you're ready to apply, then access the online application [here](#)!

we need your voice!
NOSOTRAS NECESITAMOS TU VOZ
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Fighting to end HIV in your community?
Do you have work experience with or identify as BIPOC and/or LGTBOIA+? Want to improve the community health worker experience?

HIV COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER ADVISORY GROUP

APPLY TO JOIN

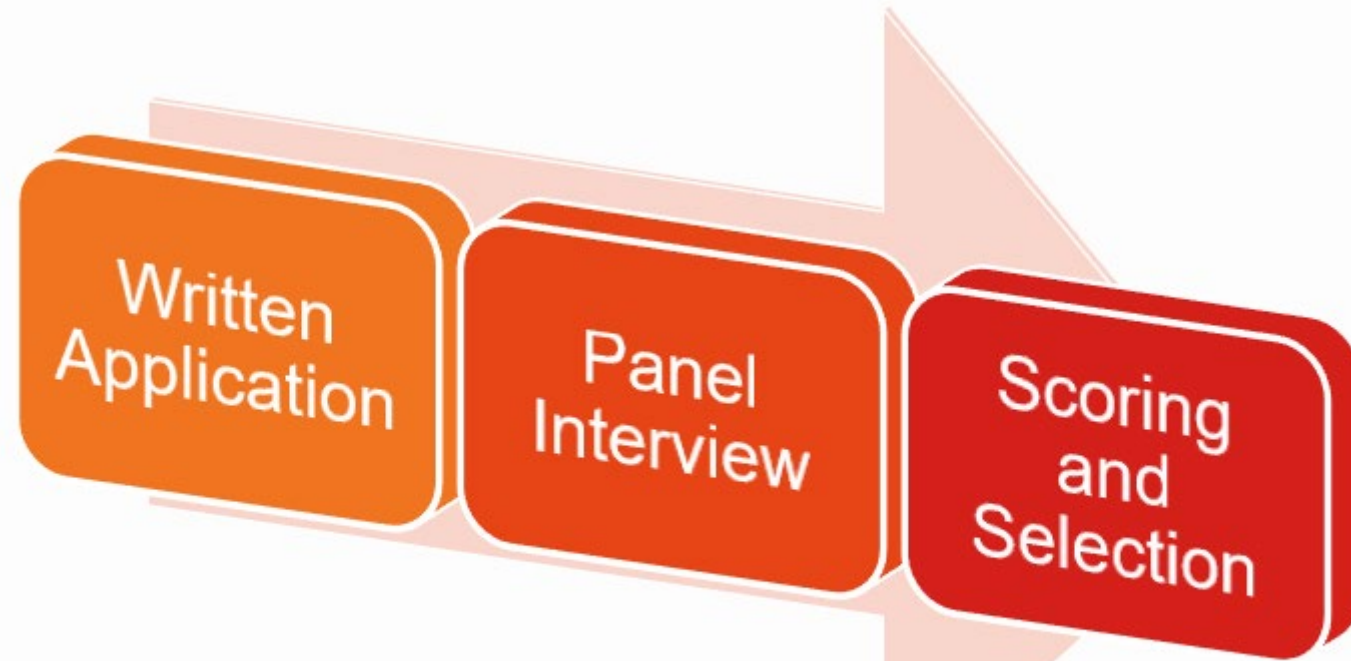
NEAETC is seeking applicants to serve on the Suffolk County HIV Community Health Worker Advisory Group beginning May 2022!

Application Deadline:
APRIL 4

AETC AEG Education & Training Center Program
New England

for more information visit the link [CLICK TO APPLY!](#)

Application Process



Application Questions

Written Application

- Brief
- Accessible
- Emphasizes experience with diverse populations



General

General:

- Demographics
- Employer/job title
- Languages Spoken
- Length of time working as CHW

Experience

Experience:

- Describe interest
- Challenges facing CHWs
- Experience with key populations: communities of color, transgender/non-binary, MSM, PWID
- Experience providing education/access to PrEP and nPEP

Panel Interview

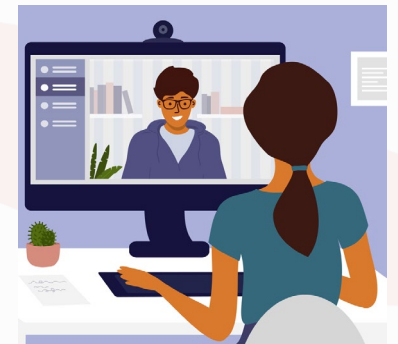
- 15-minute virtual interview
- One applicant, 2-3 panelists
- Applicants elaborate on application responses and answer additional questions about experience
- Candidates can ask questions about the group

Interview Panel Members

- NEAETC Staff
- CHW
- RN focused on HIV care at CHC
- Provider (MD, NP, PA) of HIV care at CHC
- Person living with HIV engaged in care at a CHC

Panel Selection

- Community stakeholder recommendations
- Community health center recommendations
- NEAETC Faculty



Scoring and Selection

- Partially blinded process with recusal option
- Scoring for both application and panel utilized detailed rubric
- Panelists convened prior to application cycle to review process, rubric, and conduct mock scoring process

Written Application

Scored by individual panelists

Individual scores averaged for overall application score

Panel Interview

Scored by interviewers as a group

Scores discussed and entered into score sheet by one panelist

Final Score/Selection

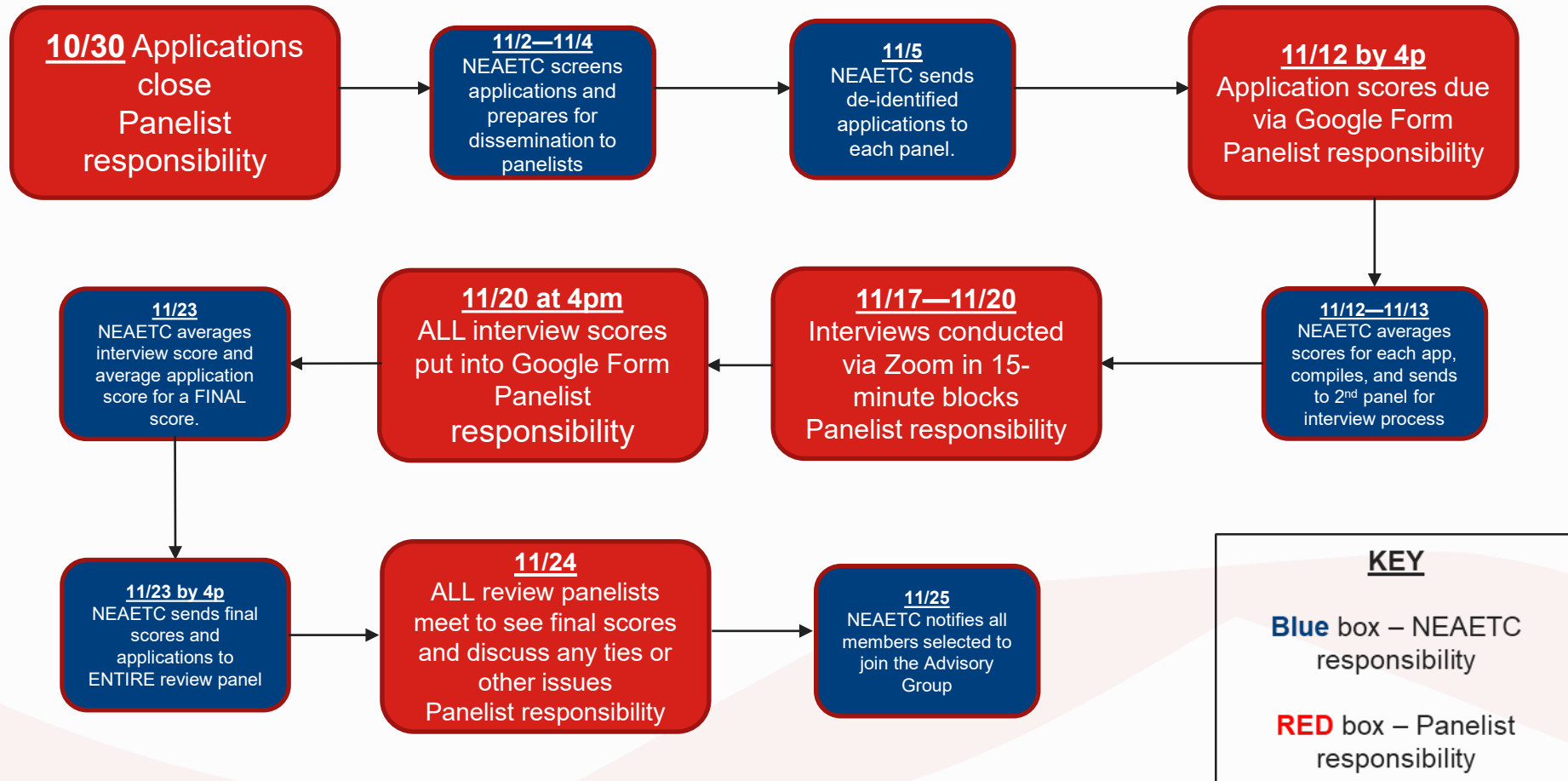
Application and interview score averaged for final candidate score

Candidates ranked by score and highest scoring candidates selected up to 22

Application/Interview Rubric

Criteria	Point Scale 0 – No Criteria Met	Point Scale 1 – Some Criteria Met	Point Scale 2 – Most Criteria Met	Point Scale 3 – Meets and Exceeds Criteria
Amount of time working as CHW	Less than 6 months	6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
Demonstrated experience providing services to communities of color in application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application indicated significant length of time working with communities of color • Has served communities of color through other roles (volunteer, for example) 	No experience	Limited experience	Moderate Experience	Extensive Experience
Demonstrated experience working with transgender and/or nonbinary individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application indicated significant length of time working with population • Has served population through other roles (volunteer, for example) 	No experience	Limited experience	Moderate Experience	Extensive Experience

Application Process Timeline



Welcoming the Group



Image of Suffolk County map of cities and towns

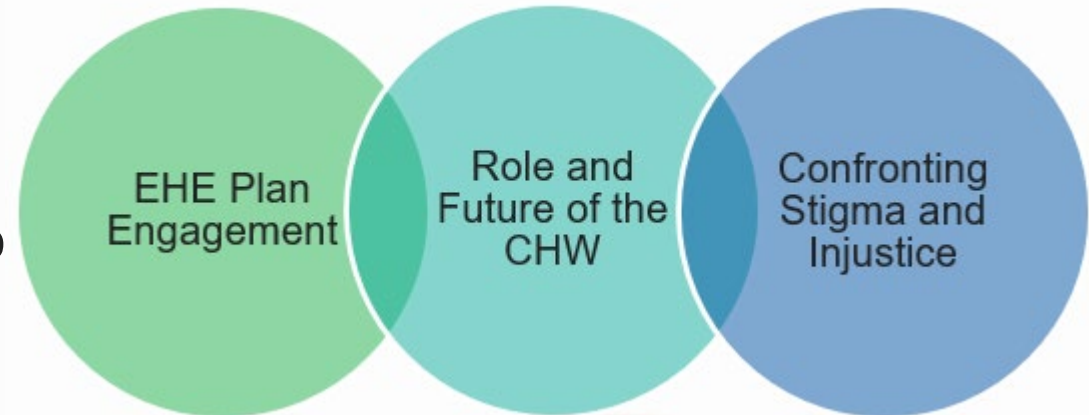
- 8 initial members, with group number fluctuating from 6-11 active members
- *Early meetings focused on:*
 - Clear communication of group role and responsibilities
 - Developing a mission to focus the work
 - Meeting guidelines and “ground rules”
 - Creation of the member info booklet to get to know peers
 - Understanding EHE and the CHW role within

Meeting format was by Zoom, 8 meetings over the course of the year on Tuesday evenings for 90 minutes

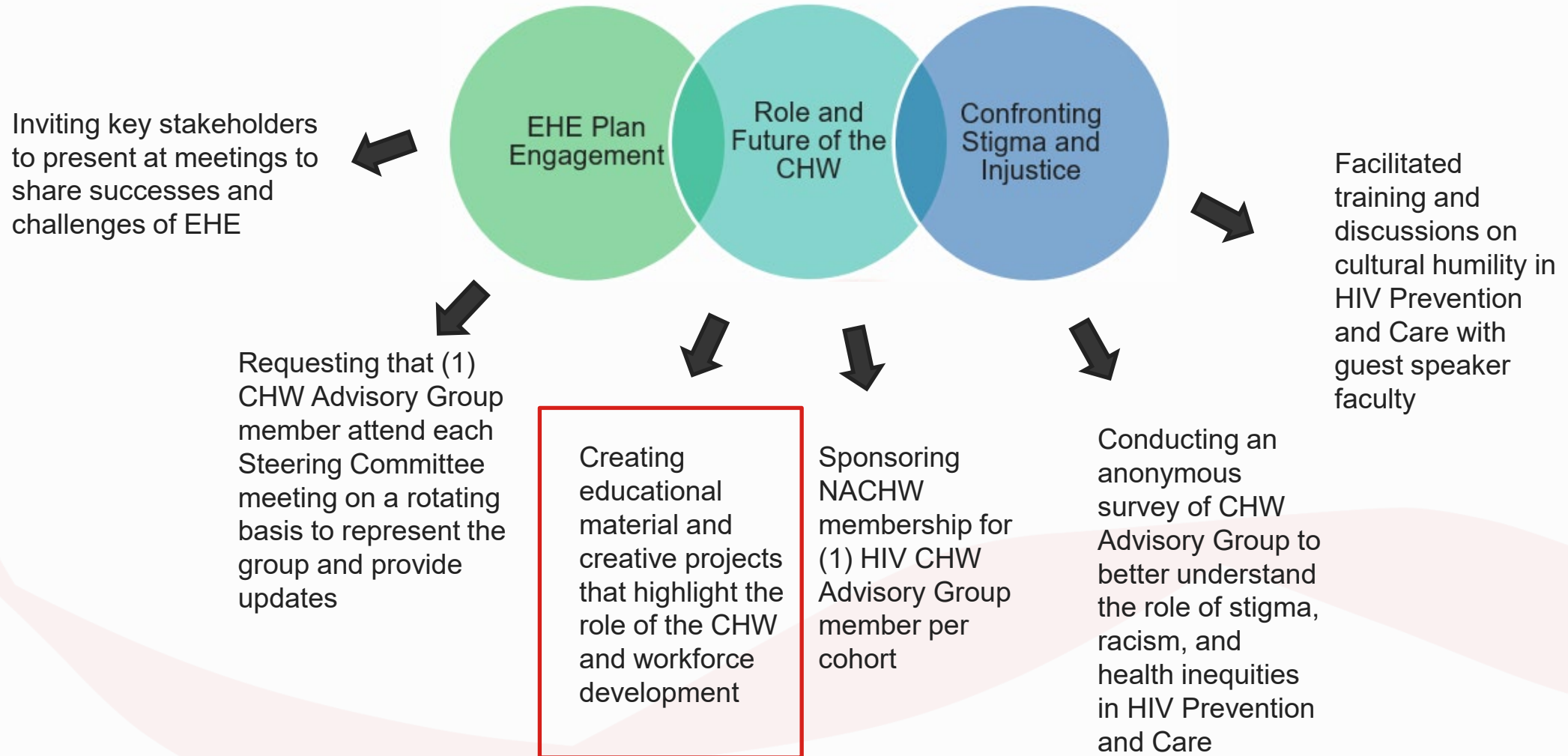
Integrating the EHE Plan

- Initial meetings focused on a review of the EHE Plan, particularly where CHWs are identified as pivotal to achieving that goal
- Pillars were reviewed to understand and inform discussions
 - NEAETC staff broke down the information to more digestible sections for learning

Focus Areas:



Focus Areas



Focus Area: Role and Future of the CHW

- “*Tying It All Together: The Vital Work of the Community Health Worker*”
 - Webinar featuring members of the CHW Advisory Group
- “*The Unseen Work of the Community Health Worker*”
 - Animated video created by members of the HIV CHW Advisory Group (First cohort) using Vyond software
 - The video has translated closed captions in the following languages: English, Español, Haitian-Creole, Português (Brasil)

More than Health Care: Part V – *Tying It All Together: The Vital Work of the Community Health Worker*



Over the last year, the *More Than Health Care* Series has explored the diverse challenges and unique opportunities for patients and providers alike at the intersection of HIV, HCV, and Substance Use. For the series capstone, we invite you to join us for a presentation and panel discussion on the glue that often holds our care continuum together: Community Health Workers. These unique roles can take on many different titles and responsibilities, but all center the patient and the idea of meeting them where they are. Community Health Workers continue to be imperative in the fight to end these epidemics. Join us as we explore their critical role and how to effectively deploy and support them in your organizations.

Virtual Panel Discussion:
Wednesday, June 16, 2021
12:00 – 1:30PM



Jackie Chu, MD
*Infectious Disease Physician,
Massachusetts General
Hospital*

Joe Shay
*Team Lead,
Project TRUST*

Marsha Ilus
*ARCH Community
Health Worker,
Boston Medical Center*

Lissette Blondet
*Executive Director,
Massachusetts Association of
Community Health Workers
(MACHW)*

Registration: <https://www.neaetc.org/events/view/17704>

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Funding: This program is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under grant number U10HA29294 (AIDS Education and Training Centers) awarded to the University of Massachusetts Medical School. This information of content and conclusions are those of the authors and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

“The Unseen Work of the Community Health Worker”



Evaluation Mechanisms

- **Surveys:**
 - Disseminated to group members after first, mid year and end of year meetings
 - Designed to better understand the group experience and allow for input on activities
 - Provided gift cards for completion of evaluation surveys

“It helps to solicit guidance from this community, both in terms of how we provide services for patient as well as how we provide support for one another.”

“Great increasing my networking with other CHW. I feel we haven't necessarily met goals I'd hoped to achieve yet as it feels like we've had some growing pains and it feels like there's a lot of initial prep and info provision that's made it hard to make plans and get the ship off the ground.”

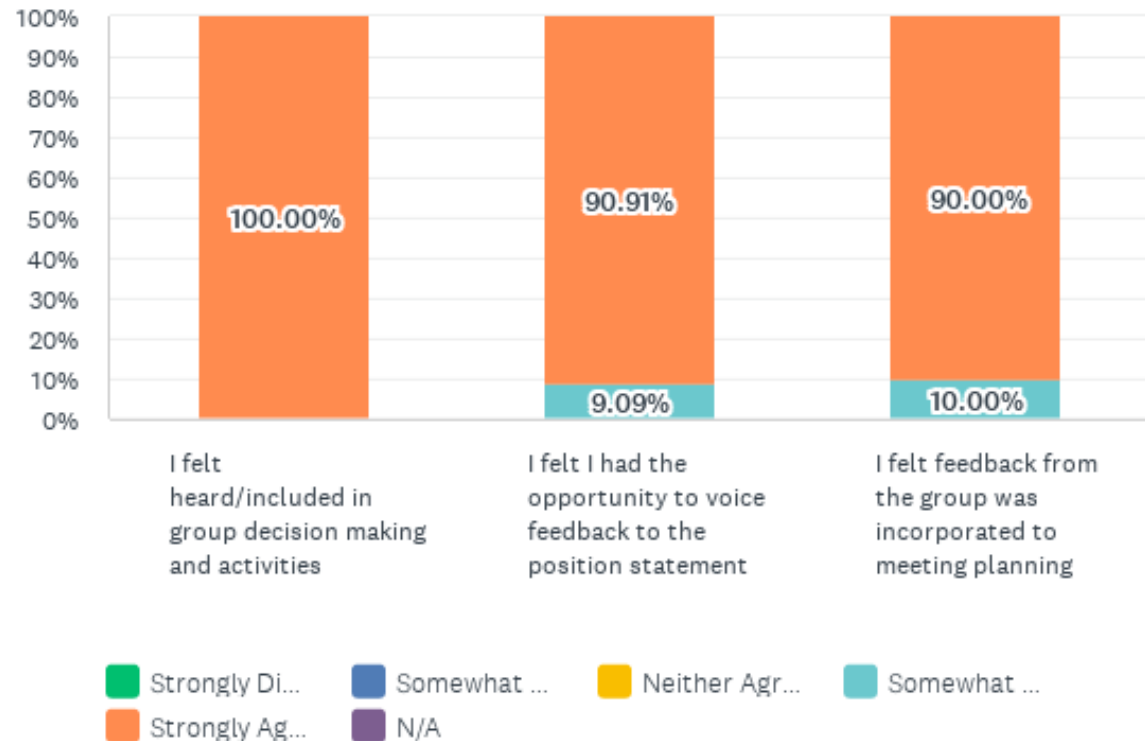
Evaluation Feedback

Surveys included opportunities to provide feedback not only on content and topics but also on meeting logistics, access to materials and overall experience

Some examples of questions included:

- *Has the CHW Advisory Group met the goals you had when you initially joined?*
- *I understand the purpose of the Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America initiative.*
- *I understand how I fit in to the EHE plan for Massachusetts.*

Q5 Group Activities



Moving Towards Member Driven

Strategies:

- Creating space for case conference discussion at each meeting
- Piloting “subcommittees” for breakout discussions and action items including establishing a digital newsletter, identifying external speakers to host and a group to focus on a creative video series
- Encouraging members to add to meeting “bulletin board” shared upcoming events, resources, trainings, etc. at the end of each meeting

Sustainability and Looking Ahead

- Expand collaborations with state and national CHW organizations and learning collaboratives
- Create animated educational videos and webinars to highlight CHW expertise
- Develop E-Newsletter
- Creation of a scholarship fund that CHW members can apply to for conferences or professional development opportunities that relate to their work



Group of CHW Advisory Group members at networking dinner May 2022

HIV CHW Advisory Group Perspectives



Challenges and Lessons Learned In Planning and Practice

Development:

- Avoiding possible duplication
- Flipping the “it’s already been done” narrative
- Getting buy-in from wide-ranging group of stakeholders for success
- Creating meeting content and developing overall strategy while rapidly launching

Application Process:

- Applicant recruitment
- Retaining applicants through the process
- Open-ended application questions
- Panelist coordination/scheduling

Implementation and Growth:

- Engagement and competing priorities and burnout
- “Zoom fatigue”
- Attempts to combat this included using “committees” (newsletter, video series, speaker recruitment in break out rooms) polls, ice breakers and check-in activities
- Overall acknowledgment that participation was largely impacted by workforce challenges

Tools for Replication

- Replication of an HIV CHW Advisory Group in other EHE jurisdictions is possible with planning and resources
 - **Development of a logic model** may help guide the use of meeting time, resources and track outcomes over time
 - A centralized accessible location for **meeting materials and resources** (Google Drive)
 - **Identifying a funding mechanism** We utilized EHE funding to support CHWs time through stipends and invoiced twice per year
 - **Having a system for feedback** (SurveyMonkey, Google Forms) helps to evaluate progress and incorporate changes as needed

HIV CHW Advisory Group Logic Model

Inputs

Financial Resources: EHE Funding

Human Resources: NEAETC staff: EHE Program Manager, Clinical Director, Program Director, Program Coordinator

Stakeholder Support: JRI, EHE Steering Committee, NEAETC Regional Office

Review Panel: (RN, provider, HIV CHWs, NEAETC staff) to conduct interviews and score applications

Applicants: up to 22 individuals working as CHWs in HIV prevention and treatment in Suffolk County

Materials: Meeting space (virtual or in-person), HIV resources for participants, speaker honoraria, attendance stipends/incentives

Activities

- 2 educational videos for providers and care teams on the role of the CHW
- Participation in at least one NEAETC sponsored series More Than Healthcare to present role of CHW
- CHW Advisory group member attendance at quarterly EHE Steering Committee Meeting
- Position statement on phlebotomy training for CHWs
- Racial justice and social equity survey to explore opportunities for training within group and beyond
- 7-8 case conference sessions
- National Association of Community Health Worker Membership and participation in Learning Collaborative Pilot Program for 1-2 group members
- 1-2 educational sessions on HIV prevention/treatment and/or related comorbidities
- 1-2 educational sessions on structural racism

Outputs

- Convening of HIV CHW Advisory Group (8) times per year
- Introduce Massachusetts EHE plan and provide overview of CHW role in plan
- Provide opportunities for CHW feedback on workforce development, HIV prevention, and care capacity building at CHCs to EHE steering committee
- Case conference opportunities for HIV CHWs to share challenges and best practices for improved patient engagement and retention in care
- Provide professional development resources and opportunities for CHWs
- Conduct educational sessions with NEAETC faculty and/or community members
- Actively engage and highlight the diverse experiences of CHWs within their communities and organizations to better identify ways to address stigma, racism, and overall social inequity as it impacts the work of EHE

Outcomes

- Improved HIV CHW engagement in EHE Plan implementation
- Improved understanding of engagement of the CHW by the EHE Steering Committee and Suffolk County community health centers

Goal: To establish a Suffolk County HIV CHW Advisory Group whose purpose is to actively engage with and provide feedback to the goals of the Ending the HIV Epidemic Plan, while also creating a community of practice for CHWs working in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment to share best practices, professional networking, and expand opportunities for collaboration.

Thank you! Questions?

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