

Raise awareness and reach your advocates

As a community health worker (CHW), you play a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of your communities. Your work has effectively increased access to health care and other vital resources, enhanced health outcomes, reduced health care costs, and more. These results make you an invaluable asset to your community.

CHWs' positive impact on public health may not be widely known among organization leaders and health care professionals who can be an important voice of support to advocate for community health worker programs. Here are some steps you can take to spread your message and raise awareness about all the important services you provide to your community.

STEP 1

Identify your potential advocates

Think about those who benefit from your services and can use their position to advocate for you. These can include:

- Public, state, and local health organizations
- Health care system administrators and chief officers
- Frontline staff (physicians, nurses, EMTs, social workers, etc.)
- Community-based organizations and nonprofits
- Insurance agencies
- Community leaders and interest groups

Remember, talking to support staff can also be a great way to get decision-makers' attention.

The advocacy funnel

It's important to identify where potential leaders are in the advocacy funnel. This will help you deliver the right message and move them toward a leadership role. Remember, advocacy is meant to raise awareness and educate leaders—it's not an attempt to influence their decisions.



1. Unawareness

Help leaders understand who CHWs are and what they do

2. Awareness

Teach leaders about the benefits of working with CHWs

3. Interest

Connect leaders with more information on CHWs

4. Involvement

Let leaders know how they can work with local CHWs

5. Influence

Help leaders actively show their CHW support

6. Leadership

Ask leaders to share their own CHW advocacy ideas and feedback



STEP 2

Show your positive impact

Share success stories

There are no better voices to speak to community health workers' positive impact than those you've directly served. Client stories can be an emotional way to share how CHWs are helping shape healthier communities—especially with organization leaders and health care professionals.

Here's what you can do:

- Gather and share your unique client experiences and success stories.
- Ask your clients to share their positive experiences by:
 - Sitting on a panel
 - Speaking at a health conference, town hall, or board meeting
 - Meeting one-on-one with health system leaders

Highlight a clear return on investment (ROI)

Health systems and other business leaders love seeing numbers and data demonstrating performance. While much of CHWs work can be hard to measure and track, these are important pieces to gather for CHW advocacy and funding.

Here's what you can look for in your community:

- A decrease in the number of emergency room visits
- An increase in health care accessibility
- An increase in the utilization of health services and community resources
- An increase in health outcomes, like chronic disease recovery
- An increase in immunization rates

Here are a few examples of research that show clear numbers:

[Penn Medicine IMPaCT Program](https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2020/february/penns-community-health-worker-program-yields-247-for-every-1-invested-annually-by-medicaid)

<https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2020/february/penns-community-health-worker-program-yields-247-for-every-1-invested-annually-by-medicaid>

Through community health worker intervention, Penn Medicine's IMPaCT program sought to address underserved community needs such as housing and food insecurity. From a randomized controlled trial of 302 clients, they found that the CHW program yielded an ROI of \$2.47 for every dollar spent—a **38 percent reduction in care costs**.

[Molina Healthcare CHW Program](https://www.orchwa.org/resources/Documents/CHW_New-Mexico-Case-Study_Issue-Brief.pdf)

https://www.orchwa.org/resources/Documents/CHW_New-Mexico-Case-Study_Issue-Brief.pdf

Molina Healthcare of New Mexico implemented a CHW program to support clients with complex health and social needs. The individuals that the program helps generate roughly 50 percent of all health care costs, despite being only 5 percent of the client population. After piloting the program for six months, they calculated that **for every dollar invested, they saved \$4**.

STEP 3

Get organized

Organization leaders and health care professionals appreciate useful information that's presented clearly and concisely. You can have the greatest impact by shaping your message to the moment.

Here are a few presentation options:

Develop a PowerPoint presentation

A PowerPoint presentation is a great way to organize your thoughts and spread the word about community health workers and their impact. It's also an easy way to deliver your message in person, through email, or as a leave-behind tool for advocates to send up the ladder. **Use the PowerPoint in this toolkit, and feel free to make it your own.**

Create an elevator pitch

It's not always easy getting the opportunity to present your message. Sometimes you just need to get your foot in the door. Think about the most important point you want to convey, then distill it into a concise pitch you can deliver in about one minute.

*Be aware of the data you're collecting and check if you need written HIPPA authorization.

Write a case study

Since community health workers work closely with their clients, a case study is also an effective way to detail and track their success stories. These can be emotional and include hard data points you've collected.

Here's the basic outline of a case study:

- Background and introduction
- Problem
- Community details and context
- CHW support role
- Challenges
- Outcomes and achievements
- Conclusions and lessons learned

Scan this code to find more information on writing a case study and see examples



STEP 4

Look for opportunities

Now that everything's ready to go—and you're feeling confident about your message—it's time to find opportunities to deliver it. Think about the best ways to reach the potential advocates you've identified.

Here's what you can do:

- Ask for one-on-one meetings
- Present at board or community meetings
- Participate in health-related community events and seminars
- Collaborate with health- and community-based organizations
- Join organizations that focus on health care access, community health, and public health workforce issues

Remember, say yes to any opportunity to get your message out! Potential advocates across Wisconsin need to hear your voice and learn about the positive impact you're making as a community health worker. So, get loud!