Evidence Supporting the Use of Community Health Workers for Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management

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Hispanic Health Council (HHC):

Mission To improve the health and social well being of Latinos and other diverse communities
- Community-based organization
- Incorporated 1978, in response to identified need for organization focused specifically on Latino health
- Founded by medical anthropologists and community activists/leaders

Core Strategies

- Translational/community based participatory research
- Evidence based direct services
- Policy advocacy
- Training
HHC’s Evidence-Based Community Health Worker Service Models

- Empowered, hands-on roles
- Rigorous training and supervision
- Culturally relevant
- Integrated into clinical health care teams and into community
- Clear delineation of function/tasks:
  CHW: clinician
- Evaluated
HHC’s Application of CHW Model

- Prenatal Case Management
- Cancer Early Detection
- Cancer Survivorship Support
- Substance Abuse Case Management
- SNAP Outreach
- Breastfeeding Peer Counseling
- Diabetes Peer Counseling
- Diabetes Stress Management Group Education
- Smoking Cessation Peer Coaching (Under Development)
Breastfeeding: Heritage and Pride: An Evidence Based Peer Counseling Intervention
Breastfeeding: Heritage and Pride Peer Counseling Program

Breastfeeding Research
- Mid-1980’s: qualitative interviews
- Early 1990’s: focus groups
- Mid-1990’s: Community Nutrition Assessment; KAB Study (HHC-UConn)
- 2000: Formative Research: Social Marketing Campaign (HHC-UConn)

Main Research Findings
- Misinformation and lack of information
- Lack of role models and support figures
- Shame and embarrassment regarding breastfeeding

Evaluation (HHC-UConn-Hartford Hospital)
- Objective: to assess the effectiveness of an existing breastfeeding peer counseling program serving a predominantly low-income Latina population in Hartford, CT

Conclusions:
- Effective
- Cost-effective
  - Healthier children
  - Savings to society

Recommendation:
- Expansion of peer counseling efforts
Breastfeeding: Heritage and Pride Peer Counseling Program

Results:

- Program replicated at Yale New Haven Hospital WIC Program, in process of expanding to Saint Francis Hospital in Hartford


- Continued research:
  - peer counselors to support EBF
  - peer counselors to support EBF among overweight and obese women

- Recognition in:
  - The Center for Disease Control’s “The CDC Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions” (2005)
  - The Institute of Medicine’s “Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation” (2012)
Peer Counseling for Chronic Disease Management: DIALBEST

The Connecticut Center for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos
www.cehdl.uconn.edu
Diabetes among Latinos Best Practices Trial (DIALBEST)

- Conducted as part of (NIH) Center for Eliminating Health Disparities Among Latinos (CEHDL, a partnership between the University of Connecticut, Hispanic Health Council and Hartford Hospital

- Randomized community-based longitudinal trial examining the impact of home-based peer counseling on behavioral, metabolic, and health outcomes among inner-city Latino(a)s with type 2 diabetes

- 17 home visits in 12 months; additional telephone contact with participants and providers

- Peer counselors met with clinical team weekly for case conferencing
Diabetes Peer Counseling Intervention Study (DIALBEST)

Results:

- HbA1C level reduction at 12 months:
  - 1 point in the intervention (PC) group
  - 0.4 point in the control (no PC) group
  - Impact sustained through the six-month post-intervention period (18 months)

- Gaps in health care identified by peer counselors, resulting in:
  - Training of medical residents:
    - Case presentations by peer counselors
    - Cross cultural training by HHC program

- Current RO1 RCT on use of Community Health Educator to impact glycemic control among Latinos with Diabetes (HHC/Yale/UConn/Hartford Hospital)
Key Points

- Infrastructure needed for CHW training, supervision
- Training curriculum specific to CHW service
- Integrated health care team/community model
- Cultural competence key:
  - Train CHWs in cultural competence and social determinants of health
  - Train health care providers in cultural competence and social determinants of health
  - Peers become part of provider training