



# UPDATE

Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance

## MICHWA: END-OF-THE-YEAR REPORT



**MISSION:** TO PROMOTE AND SUSTAIN THE INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS INTO MICHIGAN'S HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE SYSTEMS THROUGH COORDINATED CHANGES IN POLICY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

On August 18, 2011, about 70 people participated in a working meeting titled *Sustainable Funding for Community Health Worker Practice and Utilization in Michigan: Planning the Future*. The meeting was funded by a grant to the University of Michigan School of Social Work from the Nokomis Foundation of Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the purpose of bringing key stakeholders together to develop a strategic plan to promote the sustainability of community health workers (CHWs). Following this meeting, the Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance (MICHWA) was formed. MICHWA is a group of professionals, CHWs, and students dedicated to

working toward and enacting policy and systems change while cultivating CHW leadership in Michigan.

### WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR

Since August, individuals and organizations invested in CHW sustainability have created the basis for an Alliance that can make lasting changes at policy and systems levels for CHWs as well as promote CHW leadership. Four working groups (see next page) are meeting regularly. These groups are identifying goals and objectives and beginning related activities. CHW involvement has been crucial. CHW co-leadership of working

groups is a general Alliance goal, and CHWs are participating actively throughout the Alliance. The Nokomis Foundation has awarded a new grant to support the Alliance's 2012 activities.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Planning committee members will be creating governance structures, solidifying goals and objectives for the overall Alliance, and securing additional funding beyond 2012. As Alliance activities move forward, members aim to maintain continued interest from CHWs and stakeholders to keep up momentum toward sustainable CHW practice in Michigan.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**EDUCATION & WORKFORCE:** Friday, January 13 from 4:00-5:00 (conference call)

**POLICY & FINANCE:** Friday, January 13 from 3:00 to 4:00 (conference call)

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Monday, January 30, from Noon-1:00 (Skype call, in-person Ann Arbor)

**CHW NETWORK:** Tuesday, January 17 from 2:00 to 3:30 (conference call, in-person Detroit)

**PLANNING GROUP:** Friday, January 20 from 10:00 to Noon (conference call)

Above, participants attend the August 18 working meeting.

All photos courtesy of Jessica Lai



## OPTIONS: WORKING GROUPS

THE MICHIGAN COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER ALLIANCE IS FUNCTIONING THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF FOUR WORKING GROUPS AND THE PLANNING COMMITTEE. INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOUR WORKING GROUPS IS INCLUDED BELOW, ALONG WITH INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED.

Above, MSU Prof. Karen Patricia Williams, CHW Marta Lugo-Rodriguez, and Special Invited Speaker Joan Cleary (Minnesota CHW Alliance) present at the August 18 meeting; below, CHASS CEO J. Ricardo Guzman opens the meeting.



### EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

*Leaders: Linda Witte (Grand Rapids Community College) & Candace Hall (Southeast Michigan Beacon Project)*

This working group strives to learn about CHW education in Michigan and will make recommendations for curriculum, certification, and definition of CHW scope of practice. The group is currently studying training standards for CHWs statewide and nationally, and the needs of employers and of potential CHW employees in Michigan.

### POLICY & FINANCE

*Leaders: Art Franke (National Kidney Foundation of Michigan) & Pat Duthie (Spectrum Health)*

The Policy and Finance group aims to support the Alliance in achieving comprehensive policy change and sustainable financing for CHW services in Michigan. The group is currently creating a policy case statement to raise awareness about and provide data and research on the benefits of CHWs as part of health and human service systems. This document will help the Alliance better promote the integration of CHWs into these types of services in Michigan.

### COMMUNICATIONS

*Leaders: Mike Spencer (UM School of Social Work) & Celeste Sanchez (Spectrum Health)*

The Communications group promotes MICHWA's goals and objectives by supporting working groups' media needs and by disseminating Alliance materials beyond the Alliance. The group is building MICHWA's Web presence, promoting CHW awareness, identifying materials for recruiting stakeholders, and branding MICHWA statewide and nationally.

### MICHIGAN CHW NETWORK

*Leaders: Marta Lugo-Rodriguez (CHASS/REACH Detroit Partnership) & Yessenia Rodriguez (Spectrum Health)*

The Michigan CHW Network includes CHWs and their supporters. This group strives to unite CHWs statewide in efforts to advocate for CHWs, increase awareness of CHWs, and retain diverse CHWs on behalf of improving community health. All CHWs are encouraged to learn more about the Network and to get involved. Members are currently identifying Michigan CHWs and learning more about other states' CHW networks.

### INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE OR GETTING INVOLVED?

The Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance working groups are continually seeking input from community health workers and their stakeholders statewide. Our goal is to have each group co-led by a CHW and to have several CHWs participate in group activities. Not a CHW? We'd like to hear from you, too! Not sure which group is for you? You are welcome to listen in or attend group meetings to get a feel for activities. Contact Katie Mitchell (mitchkl@umich.edu) to get started.