

LINKING UNMET NEEDS WITH UNTAPPED RESOURCES: COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION SPECIALIST

How to involve the professional – trained health workforce from Latin America?

Background

A Community Health “Promotion Specialist” is a professionally – trained health worker from Latin America who brings a cultural, linguistic and professional competence much needed by our underserved and Hispanic population. These professionally – trained health workers from Latin America may not have a U.S. recognized medical, pharmacy, or nursing license, however, with retraining there may be an opportunity for these health professionals to play a vital and much-needed and anticipated role on the healthcare teams in New Mexico.

As the Affordable Care Act rolls out and an increased need for primary care support becomes ever more apparent, there is an opportunity for New Mexico's public higher education institution to create an abbreviated pathway to re-train this workforce with new skills to serve our New Mexico communities. A similar model has been developed in Southern California and is being applied in different communities in the U.S. The model could be adapted for use within other underrepresented ethnic communities such as the Vietnamese community in the International District.

Purpose of the Community Health Promotion Specialist (CHPS)

The purpose of these CHPS is to provide

- Health education and promotion – focused at primary prevention
- Health literacy
- Health advocacy
- Cultural and linguistic approach to management of chronic diseases (Stanford Model)

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the CHPSs are:

- Healthier and health literate communities
- Improved health outcomes
- Decrease health disparities (inequities)
- Chronic disease management
- Aid in driving down health care spending
- Save money – by not having to re-train a new workforce
- Efficient, effective and rapid way of increasing the health workforce
- Build capacity within the general population on health promotion and disease prevention
- Increased care to our under served populations

How can the program be evaluated? Identify a cadre of Latino (Vietnamese or other ethnic) health researchers in community engaged health services research in the adaptation design and analysis of an evidence-base intervention, including pre/post testing of educational curriculum and impact on beneficiaries health outcomes, service utilization analysis and costs/benefits analysis.

The first steps...

1. Review relevant, existing health policies in New Mexico Health. See how new policies or existing policies can be adapted, modified or added to integrate this initiative into the health workforce.
2. Review the Health Promotion Specialist job description at the NM Department of Health
3. Explore funding sources (ex. MCOs, FQHCs)
4. Explore employer prospects
5. Provide professional development support (i.e. ESL courses for medical professionals)
6. Define the scope of services, examine potential licensure requirements.

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