

NH Community Health Worker Coalition

“PULSE CHECK” 2020: SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE | DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

New Hampshire CHW Coalition Survey 2020: Results Summary

“Pulse Check”

INTRODUCTION

The role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in New Hampshire includes various titles, such as Patient Navigator, Care Coordinator, Promotores de salud, and Outreach Worker among others. Essentially, CHWs are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the communities they serve. These individuals work alongside health care professionals within hospital systems, community-based organizations, and health centers serving as a link between health care and social service programs for their fellow community members.¹

While CHWs can play an important role promoting equitable access to health care and other social services within their communities, there’s a significant financial challenge for New Hampshire health systems to sustainably employ CHWs. Simply put, it is difficult for health care and other community-based organizations to invest in the non-billable costs of CHW-provided services from health insurance payers (e.g. commercial insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare). Some contributing factors include inconsistency in the CHW’s role within in health systems, and no formalized process for CHW state certification and/or licensure.

To help resolve this challenge, in January, 2019 the New Hampshire Community Health Worker Coalition (CHW Coalition) finalized a two-year strategic plan. The goals identified in [this strategic plan](#) include:

1. Increase investments in CHWs through education for providers and stakeholder organizations on the roles and values of CHWs
2. Research the certification process and educate the membership on certification options.
3. Move towards the standardization of CHW training in NH
4. Increase CHW Coalition Membership

In an effort to assist the CHW Coalition in reaching these goals, the New Hampshire Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) along with the CHW Coalition Steering Committee, co-created a brief survey for CHW Coalition members designed to identify focus areas for the CHW Coalition’s efforts. Funding for survey development, distribution, and analysis came through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This funding is aimed to increase access to and participation in chronic disease prevention and management programs and services throughout the state focused on adults diagnosed with prediabetes, diabetes, hypertension and high blood cholesterol. One of the many strategies for implementation determined by the CDC is to increase the use of CHWs in a clinical and community based organization setting.

Results from this survey provide baseline data for the CHW Coalition to understand the current status of the following focus areas:

Awareness: How effective is the CHW Coalition at creating or increasing awareness of CHW’s role broadly in NH?

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Technical Assistance Guide: States Implementing Community Health Worker Strategies for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health” Program*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; 2015

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Growth: How well is the CHW Coalition growing in recognition and participation by CHWs and other health care professionals from partnering organizations?

Professional Development: How does the CHW Coalition meet the needs of CHWs in NH (i.e. professional development / skill-building opportunities, assistance / support professional and/or personal)?

Member Expectations: How clearly does the CHW Coalition articulate the roles / expectations of Coalition leadership / steering committee chairs to their members? What are member’s expectations of the role of the CHW Coalition?

Respondent Demographics



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160 surveys were emailed to all CHW Coalition members. After one month of emailed reminders and posted survey links on the CHW Coalition’s Facebook page, the results include 50 complete responses (~30% response rate). 70% of respondents participated using the emailed link, the remaining 30% used the link posted on social media or other internet platforms.

Respondent Demographics

78% (n=39) identified themselves as Community Health Workers, including but not limited to the titles: Patient Navigator, Care Coordinator, Outreach Worker, or other similar role. The remaining 22% (n=11) identified themselves as stakeholders, including the titles:

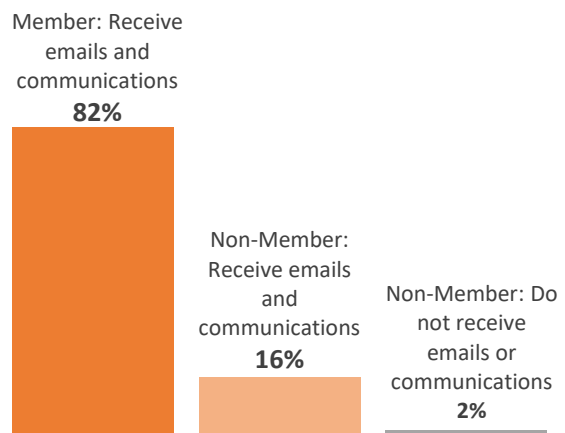
Employer or Manager of CHWs, Health System Leader, Policy Leader, Insurer, etc. The majority of stakeholder respondents identified themselves as community-based organization directors, managers, or other staff members, as well as staff members of a clinical team at a health center or private practice.

Respondent Relationship and Communication with CHW Coalition

Most respondents (82%) are CHW Coalition members and personally receive CHW Coalition emails and other communications; 16% personally receive CHW Coalition emails and communications yet are non-members.

All respondents who identify as members from both CHW and stakeholder groups are personally receiving emails and communications from the CHW Coalition. While helpful to know, there is more to investigate as 70% of the CHW Coalition member list did not respond to the survey. Could this be

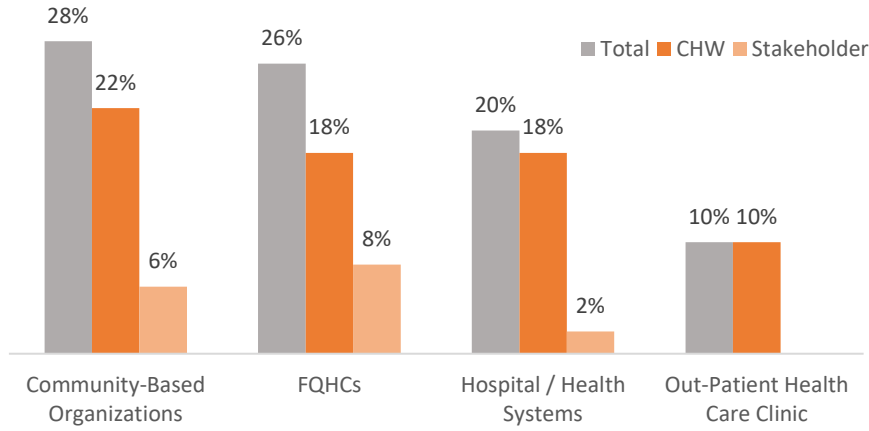
Respondent Relationship with CHW Coalition



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because they did not receive the emailed survey link (or see the link posted on CHW Coalition Facebook page), or did receive the emailed link and chose not to participate?

Respondent Workplaces



Awareness of the CHW Coalition within the Workplace

The majority of both CHW and stakeholder respondents describe their current workplaces as community-based organizations (28%), Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs, 26%), and other hospital or health systems (20%).

Most CHW respondents (79%) reported a high level of awareness of the CHW Coalition at their current place of work (47% very to extremely aware); 18% of CHWs reported little to no workplace awareness. All stakeholder respondents reported awareness of the CHW Coalition within their current workplace (92% very to extremely aware).

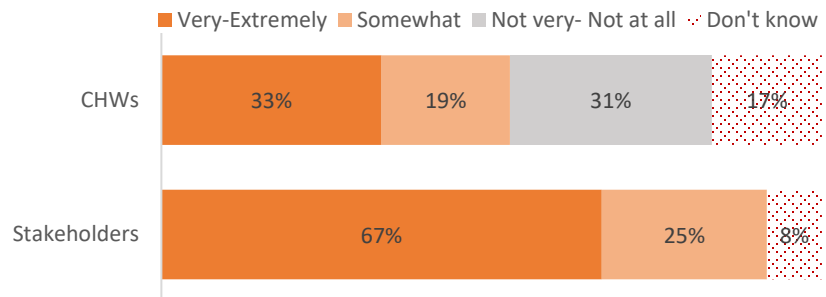
In explanation, a high level of workplace awareness was attributed to the respondent (either a CHW or stakeholder with one or more CHW on staff) being very engaged with/or on the CHW Coalition Steering committee. Others attributed a high level of workplace awareness to receiving the CHW Coalition newsletter regularly and some participation in CHW Coalition meetings. CHWs who reported little to no workplace awareness attributed this to having fewer than 3 CHWs employed and a lack of team interaction with CHWs (as peers or employees).

Effectiveness of the CHW Coalition at Creating Workplace Awareness of CHW Role

CHWs and stakeholders were also asked to rate how effective the CHW Coalition was at creating awareness of the role of CHWs at their respective workplaces. Most stakeholders (92%) reported the CHW Coalition was effective (67% very to extremely), while 52% of

CHWs found the Coalition effective (33% very to extremely). 31% of CHW respondents reported the CHW Coalition was not effective at creating awareness of the role of CHWs within their workplace.

Effectiveness in Creating CHW Awareness

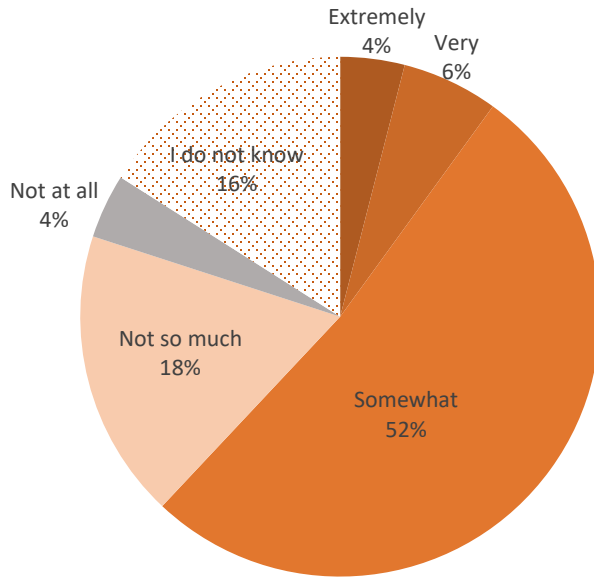


What more could the NH CHW Coalition do to increase awareness of the role of CHWs within the workplace? Many (29%) respondents requested the CHW Coalition to specifically engage their workplace. And more than one third (34%) of respondents suggested the CHW Coalition perform targeted outreach

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to health systems, community-based organizations, and other employers of CHWs through promotional materials and convening to educate on the role (in-person or virtually).

Total Responses: Community Based Organization Awareness of CHW Coalition



Awareness of the CHW Coalition within Community-Based Organizations

Of the respondents who interact with community-based organizations (CBOs), 52% of CHWs reported some CBO awareness of the CHW Coalition (only 5% very to extremely), while 92% of stakeholders reported CBO awareness (25% very to extremely). This higher level of CBO awareness of the CHW Coalition is not surprising as almost one-third of all respondents identified their place of work as a CBO.

For those who reported little to no CBO awareness, the following quote provides a concise overview of the respondents’ collective sentiment:

“Many organizations are just coming up to speed on CHWs and their knowledge is not broad enough to include the [CHW] Coalition.”

More work can be done statewide to bring CBOs “up to speed” through education and promotional activities. As one CHW put it:

“... some [CBOs] are somewhat aware, others not at all... However, in my experience, we are still (and always will be) at a phase of needing to vigorously and continuously explain what CHWs are/do in order to promote the workforce; that precedes awareness of a coalition.”

CHW Coalition Effective at Creating CBO Awareness of the role of CHWs

There was more uncertainty in the response to this question from CHWs than there was for stakeholders. Almost half of the CHW respondents did not know or did not believe the CHW Coalition was effective at creating awareness of the CHW role within CBOs. All stakeholders reported awareness of CHWs within CBOs (58% very to extremely).

Similarly to the general workplace awareness of the CHW Coalition, respondents suggested more engagement of CBOs (47%), and targeted outreach (42%) focused on the value of a CHW, and provide examples of how best to integrate this role within their particular organization.

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Awareness of the CHW Coalition by Health Care Providers

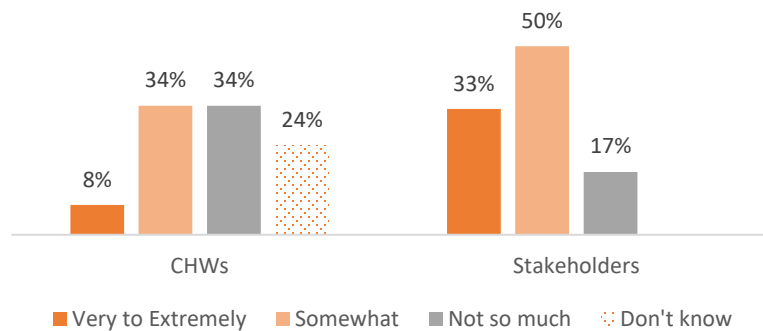
Fewer CHW than stakeholder respondents reported provider awareness of the CHW Coalition; 42% of CHWs versus 83% of stakeholders.

To explain the reported lack in provider awareness of the CHW Coalition, respondents offered the following:

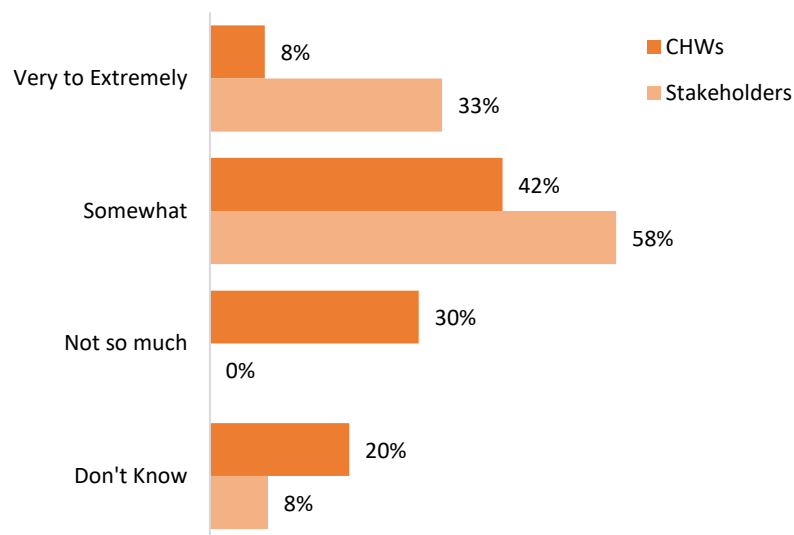
“Provider focus has been on the services provided by the CHWs and not on the support(s) they require.”

“The [health care providers] we [CHWs] communicate directly with regularly are aware, but we don't communicate with all providers on a face to face basis.”

Provider Awareness of CHW Coalition



Provider Awareness of CHW Role



CHW Coalition Effective at Creating Provider Awareness of the Role of CHWs

There is also discrepancy between responses from CHWs and stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of the CHW Coalition in creating awareness of the CHW's role with health care providers. Half of CHW respondents reported provider awareness of the role of CHWs (8% very to extremely) compared to 91% of stakeholders who reported a high level of provider awareness (33% very to extremely).

“I [CHW] mainly work with social workers. Providers are too busy to recognize our roles.”

What can the CHW Coalition do to increase awareness of the role of CHWs with the health care provider population? All respondent suggestions point to increased engagement of providers in targeted outreach or marketing campaigns, with content specific to providers' practice needs.

Importance of Membership to the CHW Coalition

Almost all respondents (93% of CHWs and 88% of stakeholders) reported it is personally important for them to be an active member of the CHW Coalition. Majority of respondent groups also reported CHW Coalition membership as important to the work they do. It is important to note however, that 14% of

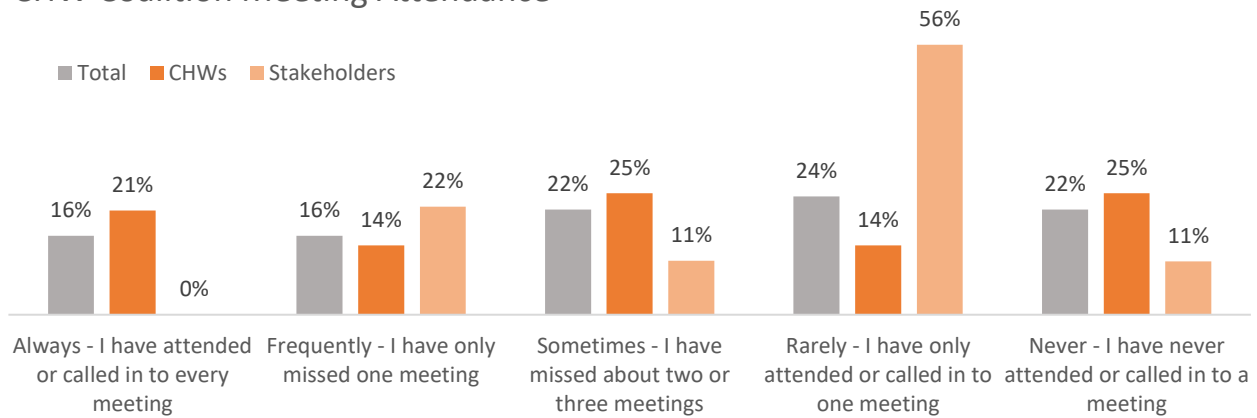
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CHWs and 22% of stakeholders who found membership not important to their work personally receive communications, yet do not believe they are CHW Coalition members.

Engagement as CHW Coalition members

In contrast to the high importance CHW Coalition membership holds for both CHWs and stakeholders, 39% of CHWs and 67% of stakeholders reported rarely or never attending meetings (in-person or remotely).

CHW Coalition Meeting Attendance



The following are the top identified challenges to attending meetings:

1. Job duties conflict with meetings (36%)

“My various work schedule is spontaneous making it difficult at times to call in and be a part of these meetings.”

2. Coalition meeting location and/or time is inconvenient (32%)

“Ability to attend in person depends on the location.”

“The technology I have available most of time is not conducive to calling in...”

3. General sentiment of both stakeholders and CHWs lacking time to attend meetings (18%)

“It’s hard to get the other things done at work to help our patients and being able to attend meetings. As with most people I’m sure, I have multiple roles I’m playing at my facility.”

What can the CHW Coalition do to improve engagement and participation of its members and increase overall membership of CHWs and stakeholders? Most respondents requested the CHW Coalition develop an improved way of communicating and scheduling meetings. (Note: Since the survey has been deployed, improvements to the NH CHW Coalition communication have been made with the integration of Basecamp™, an online platform used for member outreach and interaction through email newsletters and online forums, as well as a communal space to store or share resources.)

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Other respondents would like to see the CHW Coalition play more of an advocacy role for CHWs at their work place. This could be through CHW Coalition-led education, marketing or advertising campaigns particularly for stakeholders, or hosting a CHW-focused event at the work place.

“The value of [CHWs] needs to be identified. Do employers want to see their CHWs learning more job specific skills? Is it about finding sustainable ways to fund CHWs? Certification? Employers need to be given the opportunity to have a discussion on what they would like to see for themselves and the CHWs.”

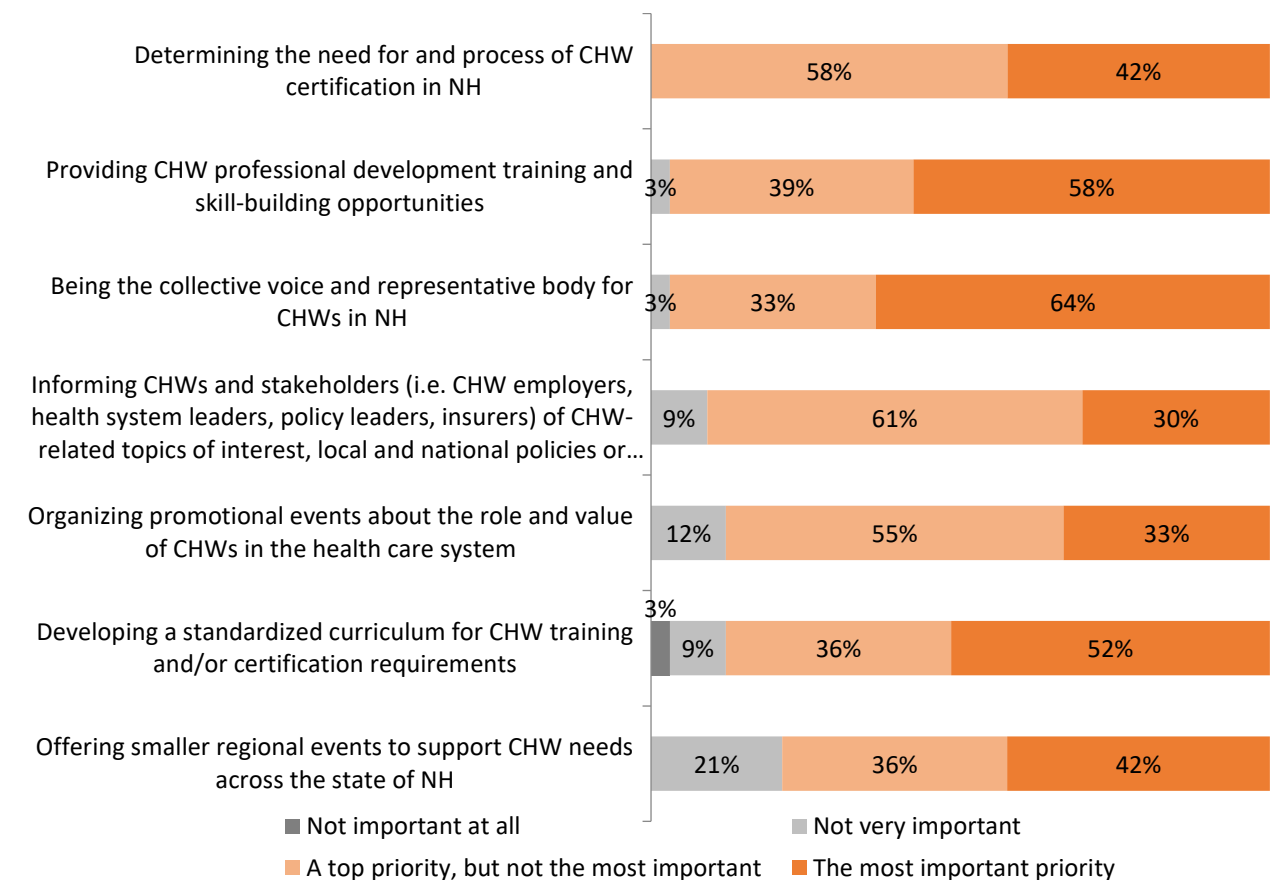
“Reach out to organizations employing CHWs and ask them to present on their organization and work of CHWs at a coalition meeting. How has employing CHWs changed/improved work?”

Respondent Participation in CHW Coalition Events

68% of CHW and 56% of stakeholder respondents reported participating in workshops and/or training offered by the CHW Coalition. All reported the workshop/training content was valuable to the work they do. The biggest barriers to participation in CHW Coalition workshops/trainings are similar to barriers to general engagement: location and/or time of the events are not convenient, and lack in flexibility in work schedules to make CHW Coalition events a priority.

CHW Coalition Priorities

Respondents were asked to rank current CHW Coalition activities by stating which the most and least important priorities should be. The graph below shows activities ranked from most to least important.



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Expectations of the CHW Coalition’s Role

After rating proposed CHW Coalition’s top priorities, respondents were then asked to provide their thoughts on what they expect the CHW Coalition’s role to be. Most (62%) of individuals responded and the following expectations are ranked most to least.

35%	Advocacy / collective voice for the CHW role/workforce	“...to be a collective voice to represent CHW's for policies that affect CHW work (use/function/credentialing), and to be a place for networking/support amongst CHW's.”
16%	Provide education and skill-building opportunities for CHWs	
16%	Leader in the efforts for increasing awareness and advancement of the CHW role	
13%	Provide education on the role and value of CHWs at large (e.g. to health care centers/providers, patients, and community at large)	
10%	Certification development / lead on certification efforts	
10%	Conveners of CHWs providing networking opportunities	

Role of CHW Coalition Steering Committee

Most responders (100% of stakeholders and 86% of CHWs) have at least some clarity of the role of CHW Coalition Steering Committee. When respondents were asked what they expect the role of the Steering Committee to be, the top-reported expectations are provided in the graphic below.

45%	CHW Coalition Leadership	While most respondents have heard about efforts toward CHW certification (100% of stakeholders), 20% of CHWs have not.
32%	CHW Representatives / advocates for the workforce	

For the CHWs who are aware of the efforts for CHW certification: 40% have heard very little and have little information; 40% have heard about certification and have some information; 20% are well informed about certification and can be a resource of information for others. All stakeholder report having at least some information about certification.

Capturing the shared sentiment reported by all who have heard about the CHW Coalition’s efforts toward certification of the role, one CHW said:

“[It] feels as though the wheels are spinning on certification and need to move forward with action. Too much discussion that really accomplishes nothing.”

This sentiment can be interpreted as encouraging for the CHW Coalition as it demonstrates a desire for CHW certification within the state, and the CHW Coalition’s inclusion of the CHW voice in the conversations.

Appendix A: NH CHW Coalition Strategic Plan



NH CHW Coalition Strategic Plan Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan for the NH CHW was drafted in January 2019 by the five-member Steering Committee. The Strategic Plan prioritizes four goals that the Coalition will work to complete within a two-year time frame. These goals include: Increasing investments in CHWs through education for providers and stakeholder organizations to inform them about the roles and value of CHWs; Researching the certification process and begin to outline the Coalition’s view of potential NH certification requirements; Initiate a move towards standardization of CHW training in NH; and to grow the NH CHW Coalition by increasing membership by 10%. These are goals that were identified as priorities by Coalition members during a strategic planning exercise.

The NH CHW Coalition Steering Committee will use this document as a road map to address the priorities for CHW growth in NH. Each goal is attached to specific strategies that have been thoughtfully crafted to guide the process, with added objectives, deadlines and the responsible party for implementation and leadership. The Steering Committee will use this working document in their monthly meetings and engage the Coalition members in assisting to meet the goals. The status of each goal will be re-visited every six months by the Steering Committee and progress and set backs will be shared with Coalition membership. This plan is meant to be fluid and can be amended to meet the needs of this growing organization.

Appendix B: NH CHW Coalition “Pulse Check” 2020 Survey

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:350a42c1-4f4a-4795-9f5a-d65cef07163f>

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