

Community Health Worker Systems Navigation Defined

Prepared by the MNCHWA Legislative Action Committee (1/29/24)

Community health workers (CHWs) are a health equity workforce. CHWs come from the communities they serve, sharing identities, geography, and experiences. This commonality uniquely qualifies CHWs to relate with and provide support to people in their community.

Systems navigation provided by CHWs includes client-centered, culturally and linguistically-appropriate activities that take place in a range of settings including community settings that:

- Increase access to holistic and integrated physical health, mental health and dental care
- Help individuals and families navigate health and social systems and overcome barriers to care
- Connect individuals and families with covered services
- Promote continuity of care and information sharing across the care team
- Improve health outcomes, advance health equity and lower the cost of care

CHW activities needed to meet community connection and navigation goals include, but are not limited to:

- Helping clients identify and overcome barriers to care
- Addressing clients' physical and mental health as well as social drivers of health
- Linking clients to services related to holistic and integrated physical health, mental health and dental care
- Providing follow-up and connections to a range of services including:
 - Adult education - GED and post-secondary education
 - Appointment scheduling and follow-up
 - Behavioral/mental health referrals
 - Child and teen education
 - Cultural healing
 - Dental health referrals
 - Developmental referral
 - Employment
 - Family planning
 - Food security
 - Health coverage
 - Housing
 - Immunization referral
 - Health education
 - Medical home
 - Medical referral
 - Medical screening
 - Medication therapy management
 - Patient navigation
 - Postpartum care
 - Pregnancy care
 - Self-management support
 - Social service referral
 - Substance use referral
 - Transportation assistance