

Meeting Summary for The Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health Zoom Meeting

May 06, 2025 10:58 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 931 0050 6337

Quick recap

The Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health meeting focused on the importance of consumer voice in behavioral health, discussing the roles of community health workers, peer counselors, and care coordinators. The group explored the potential implementation of community health worker certification and reimbursement, as well as the integration of these roles in various healthcare settings. Additionally, the council discussed the development of a faith-based trauma-informed toolkit and ways to engage more with communities and neighborhoods.

Next steps

Fatmata Williams (DSS) to contact the person leading the Community Health Worker (CHW) effort within DSS and provide an update to the group.

Co-Chairs Alice Forrester and Brenetta Henry to discuss bringing in speakers for future meetings on CHWs and peer counselors.

Alice to arrange for Odell Cooper to join a future meeting to discuss her work with faith communities.

Kim Haugabook to explore ways for more faith-based organizations and churches to participate in the support demonstration grant.

All members to reflect on the role of CHWs and peer counselors in behavioral health and how they can work in a multidisciplinary team.

David to send out the link to the CHW information shared by Carlos to all group members (see below).

[Free Peer Support Groups | The Hub CT | United States](#)

Summary

Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in Behavioral Health Oversight Council Meeting

The Behavioral Health Oversight Council meeting begins with attendees joining and greeting each other. David informs the group that he was recently hospitalized for a kidney stone. Alice and Brenetta briefly discuss their plans to focus on peer counseling, with Brenetta mentioning she will call Alice later with some ideas. As more participants join, Alice initiates the start of the meeting at 11:03, and David begins recording the session.

Consumer Voice in Behavioral Health

Alice led a discussion on the importance of consumer voice in behavioral health, focusing on community health workers, peer counselors, and care coordinators. The group agreed on the need for a peer counseling model or community health workers to assist individuals in acute distress. Alice also mentioned a DPH work group exploring a universal intake form for mental health crises, with consumers suggesting the presence of a peer counselor would be beneficial. The need for interpretation services in future meetings was acknowledged, with Carlos Blanco joining the call to provide translation.

Medicaid Reimbursement for Community Health Workers

Sam Haun discussed the progress of Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers in Connecticut, mentioning that the Department of Social Services (DSS) is developing a model for implementation. She also mentioned the role of the Community Health Worker Coalition in ensuring the implementation of the legislation and advocating for sustainable funding for community health workers. Alice asked Sam to define what the Health Foundation describes as a community health worker, to which Sam responded that they consider it a broad umbrella, including doula work and other community-based roles. Fatmata was asked for an update on the CHW study, but she did not have one at the time.

<https://www.cthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/12.4.24-Community-Health-fact-sheet.pdf>

Community Health Worker Certification Discussion

Alice discussed the potential of the community health worker (CHW) certification for peer counselors, noting that it requires 1,800 hours of training. Brenetta suggested that lived experience could be incorporated into this training. Carlos mentioned that family members caring for loved ones were seeking CHW certification to receive reimbursement. Fatmata confirmed that the certification process allows for multiple pathways, including academic and lived experience routes.

Community Health Workers Payment Discussion

Alice discussed the potential of community health workers being paid for their work, which has been a topic of conversation for 10 years. Neva Caldwell shared her personal experience of helping her father and daughter without any assistance and expressed the need for more information to help others in similar situations. Fatmata clarified that community health workers are hired by provider companies and are not independent entities. Alice mentioned that social venture partners had raised questions about the differences between community health workers, peer counselors, and care coordinators. Carlos shared a flyer about an event related to community health workers and offered to send it to Alice and David (see below).

Community Health Workers in Behavioral Health

The group discusses the role of community health workers (CHWs) in behavioral health settings. They explore how CHWs could work alongside therapists and care coordinators to provide more comprehensive support to clients, especially in outpatient clinics. The conversation touches on the challenges of having multiple providers for one client and the need for better integration of services. There is also discussion about the use of peer counselors in substance use treatment and the potential for CHWs in child welfare systems. The group agrees on the importance of taking a holistic approach that includes behavioral health in any CHW role.

Faith-Based Trauma-Informed Toolkit Development

The meeting focused on the development of a faith-based trauma-informed toolkit to support faith leaders in providing services and resources to their communities. The group discussed the potential for community health workers and peer counselors to be developed to assist in the behavioral health world. The group agreed to continue their discussions and explore ways to engage more with communities and neighborhoods.

From Carlos Blanco :



Lobby Day Agenda
2023.docx

Community Health Worker Lobby Day Agenda

Thursday, April 6, 2023, at 9am-2:30pm

210 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106, Connecticut State Capitol

Room 310, The Old Judiciary Room

9:00 - 2:30 PM	CHW Tabling in Concourse - 10 Organizations <i>(set up time: 8 am - 9 am)</i>
9:00-9:30 AM	Light Breakfast (All) Welcome & overview of the day
9:30 – 10:15 AM	3 Exciting speakers! Come & hear from CHW advocates & legislators!
10:15 AM - 12:00 PM	Delivering Postcards to Legislators
12:00-12:45 PM	Lunch in room 310, Capitol
12:45-1:30 PM	Afternoon Meeting Session w/Legislators
1:30-2:30 PM	Celebration & Closing Out



COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER LOBBY DAY

RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT CHWS, THEIR ROLE IN ADVANCING HEALTH
EQUITY, & THE NEED FOR HUSKY REIMBURSEMENT

TO RSVP, PLEASE EMAIL HESINTERN@HESCT.ORG

FEATURING:

- Interacting w/ Legislators
- Lunch & Refreshments
- CHW Tabling
- Patricia Baker Award for Health Equity Advocacy
- CHW Proclamation - Celebrating CHW Day in CT

Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/mu4tp64e> for more details



APRIL 6TH, 2023 9:00 - 2:30 PM

210 Capitol Ave, Hartford, CT 06106, Connecticut State Capitol



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