



Community Health Workers in New Hampshire

What is a Community Health Worker (CHW)?

New Hampshire has adopted the American Public Health Association definition of a Community Health Worker (CHW) as a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community they serve. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a liaison between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery¹.

Table 1. Summary of where CHWs are employed in NH and what they do

Where do they work in New Hampshire?	What do they do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Health Centers (CHC) • Community Based Organizations (CBO) • Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) • Family Resource Centers (FRC) • Hospitals² • Public Health Departments • Regional Public Health Networks (RPHN) • Rural Health Clinics • Agencies providing substance use disorder supports • Schools <p>Community Health Center CHWs work one-on-one with individuals to help them manage medical conditions and provide health education. They also attend community events to maintain a health center presence.</p> <p>Family Resource Center CHWs help individuals and families connect to various SDOH resources to address health disparities.</p> <p>Regional Public Health Network also serve individuals one on one to make connections with community based agencies as well as support Public Health initiatives and education events within communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help increase positive health & wellbeing outcomes through knowledge, access and self-sufficiency support such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach - Screen for Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), provide resource navigation support to patients after hospital discharge, help individuals access health care and preventative services like health screenings. • Community Education - Connect individuals with health and social service resources (health insurance, vaccines, food & nutrition resources, benefits, housing, childcare, etc.) • Informal Counseling - Provide education and support to improve an individual's ability to manage their health and well-being, use reflective listening methods used to motivate people to change • Social Support - Help individuals manage chronic disease, such as diabetes, and prevent hospitalization through health education • Advocacy¹- Advocate to a provider for an individual and help navigate the health and social service system

How are CHW positions funded in New Hampshire?

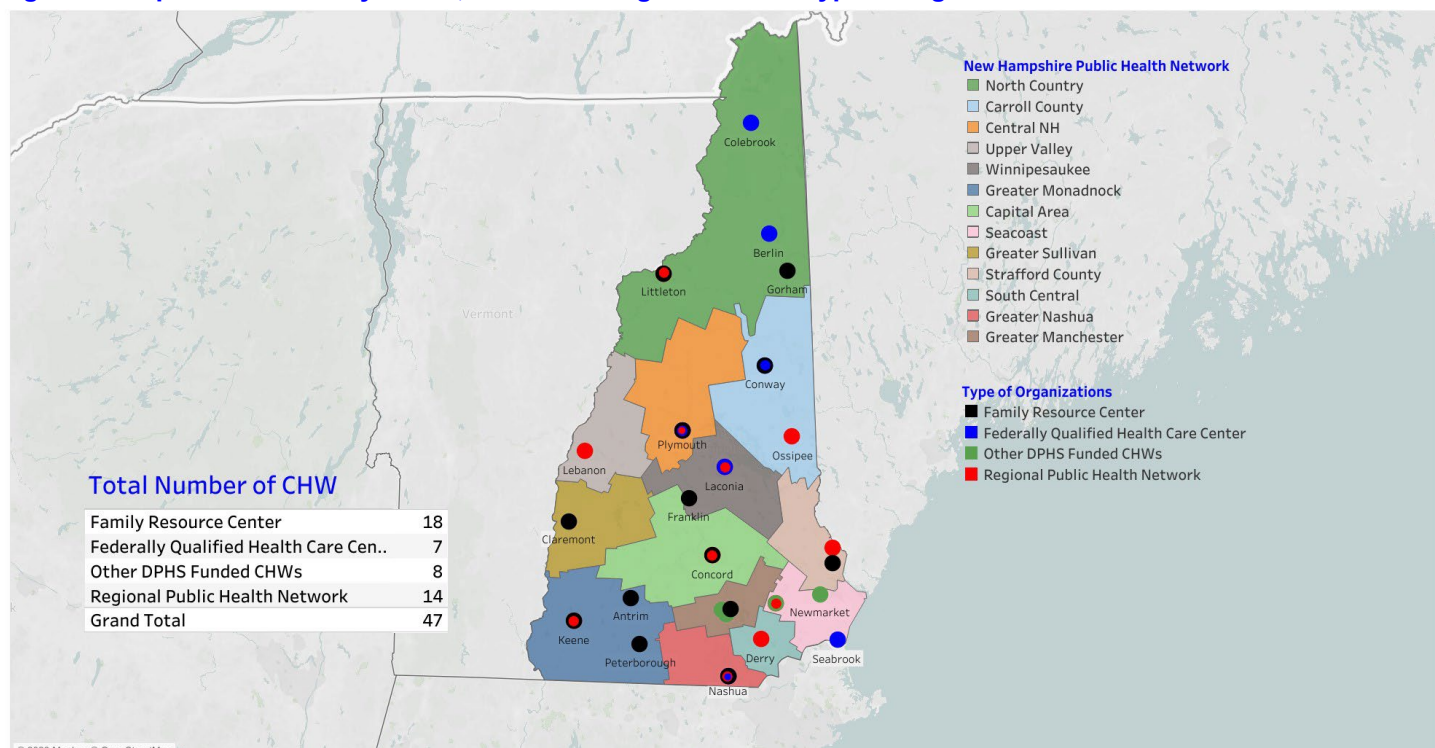
There are over 100 CHWs employed in NH financed by private, philanthropic and federal sources. Historically, the resources to support CHWs in NH and those currently employed throughout the state are often reliant on time-limited grant funding.³ Thirty-nine NH CHWs are currently funded by the Health Disparities Grant, managed by the Division of Public Health Services (DPHS), including those employed by RPHNs, FRCs and CHCs. Eight CHWs are funded by other DPHS programs such as school based CHWs (See Figure 1).

¹Association, A. P. (2023, 12 5). *American Public Health Association Community Health Workers*. Retrieved from American Public Health Association: <https://www.apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/community-health-workers>

²Affairs, M. N. (2021, May 24). *A Community Health Worker Intervention Reduces Hospital Readmissions*. Retrieved from The Harvard Gazette: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/05/community-health-worker-intervention-reduces-hospital-readmissions/>

³Mason, C. R. (2023, 12 15). *CHW Sustainable Financing- CHW Document Resource Center*. Retrieved from NACHW: <https://nachw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/SustainableFinancing2023.pdf>

Figure 1: Map of NH CHWs by RPHN, DPHS funding source and type of organization



Does New Hampshire have a CHW certification process?

NH does not have an established CHW certification process or standard statewide training. CHW training is provided by two Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) with curriculum derived from the C3 National CHW core consensus project⁴. Over the last few years, a workgroup led by the [CHW Coalition](#) and other professionals in NH have done research and concluded that it would be best for NH to establish a voluntary CHW certification process. Recently, [North Country Health Consortium](#) convened a “CHW Workforce” group which meets monthly to discuss topics related to the CHW workforce and NH CHW certification. Participants include representatives from hospitals, FRCs, RPHNs, CHCs, [Southern AHEC](#), community organizations, [CHW Coalition](#) members and the DPHS CHW Community Engagement Specialist.

There is currently a **2024 Health Care Workforce SB 403** proposed to:

- *Establish the position of and regulation of community health workers through voluntary certification.*
- *Establish various programs and appropriations focused on community and health care workforce*

Why is CHW certification a national topic?

National CHW certification does not currently exist, however numerous states have created their own CHW certification processes⁵. States have established CHW certification to help advance the profession and bring to light the role that CHWs have in helping community members access resources to promote overall health. Many states have worked to identify other sources of sustainable funding for CHW work such as coverage by Medicaid, requiring standard statewide CHW credentials to be established. A return on investment study found that for every dollar spent on an intervention by a CHW, an average of \$2.47 could be returned to a Medicaid payer⁶.

We're helping them overcome a major barrier by going to where they are and telling them they can access care... we are being more proactive [about] overcoming their perceived barriers.

- Community Health Center leader

For additional information email: chwinfo@dhhs.nh.gov

⁴ C3 The Community Health Worker Core Consensus Project: <https://www.c3project.org/roles-competencies>

⁵ Carl Rush, E. H. (2022, December 7). State Approaches to Community Health Worker Financing through Medicaid State Plan Amendments. Retrieved from National Academy For State Health Policy: <https://nashp.org/state-approaches-to-community-health-worker-financing-through-medicaid-state-plan-amendments/>

⁶ Shreya Kangovi, N. M. (2020). Evidence-Based Community Health Worker Program Addresses Unmet Social Needs and Generates Positive Return on Investment. *Health Affairs*.