Integrating Community Health Workers as Part of the HIV Care Team in Rural and Urban Settings to Improve Viral Suppression in the Memphis TGA

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Where we work

- Approximately 7,613 People with HIV across the Shelby Country-Memphis TGA
- CDC ranks Memphis MSA 4th with new infections 27.3 per 100,000 and prevalence 530 per 100,000
- 70% persons linked to care in 1 month
- 62% reach viral suppression
## Aims

1. Explore and identify the individual, organizational and community level determinants that affect community health worker (CHW) integration and sustainability at four agencies in Shelby County-Memphis TGA.

2. Evaluate the CHW intervention (training and coaching sessions for CHWs and supervisors) on client outcomes (stigma reduction, engagement & retention in HIV care, viral suppression).

3. Adapt and disseminate standardized policies and procedures for CHWs as part of the HIV care team for Shelby County-Memphis TGA in accordance with the Ending the Epidemic workplan.
Implementation Science Methodologies

- EPIS framework (AIM 1 & 3)
  - Explore determinants of CHW integration
  - Adapt & tailor the CHW training intervention program
- REAIM:
  - Client and agency outcomes

CHW Evidence Informed Intervention

- Adapt HRSA evidence informed intervention
  - Implementation manual

- Training curricula
  - https://targethiv.org/library/chw-curricula
  - https://targethiv.org/library/community-health-worker-supervisor-curriculum


Key Outcomes:

Adaptation of County- wide Training Curricula in Memphis TGA 2020-2022

- 32 hours trainings 16 hrs HIV; 16 hrs CHW topics (pre –COVID)
- 13 hours coaching sessions; 16 hours virtual

Additional trainings added specific specialized content.

- Delivering HIV services during a pandemic
- Medical mistrust & COVID vaccine
- Cultural humility
- Addressing individual and collective trauma
- Harm reduction: A strategy for empowerment
- Resilience
- Self-care
- Strategies to increase respect for community health workers within work relationships

Trainings led by members of the community:

- Ryan White funding for the Shelby County RW Program
  - Led by Shirley Terry-Lewis, Shelby County Health Department Training & Technical Assistance Coordinator
- Engagement in care for mothers with HIV during pregnancy and postpartum
  - Led by Latrina Moore-Galloway & Dominic Barnes, Community Health Workers
- Gender affirming care
  - Led by Michelle Anderson & Shonnii Hayes, Early Intervention Specialists
- Supporting people struggling with substance use & mental health
  - Led by Mardrey Wade-Kiles, Counselor at Alliance Healthcare
Key outcomes: AIM 2

- **Reach**
  - Trained 57 Community Health Workers & 8 Supervisors across 7 organizations

- **Adoption**
  - 27 CHWs & 3 supervisors have completed trainings through June 2022 across 3 organizations (47%)

- **Implementation**
  - Assessing knowledge & skills for prevention & care strategies with clients (Feb 2020-February 2021)

*paired t-test Significant at P<0.05

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Items</th>
<th>Pre test Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Post -3 months Mean (SD)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate about clients with HIV care team*</td>
<td>4.2 (0.97)</td>
<td>4.8 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort explaining the HIV virus</td>
<td>4.2 (1.0)</td>
<td>4.4 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to explain the importance of medications</td>
<td>4.2 (1.4)</td>
<td>4.5 (0.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfort helping clients address &amp; manage stigma &amp; disclosure</td>
<td>4.1 (0.8)</td>
<td>4.6 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining PrEP, PEP, TaSP</td>
<td>3.8 (1.4)</td>
<td>4.0 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving clients via telehealth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining COVID prevention strategies</td>
<td>4.2 (0.9)</td>
<td>4.8 (0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to address concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine*</td>
<td>3.4 (1.1)</td>
<td>4.7 (0.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to provide trauma informed care to clients*</td>
<td>3.8 (1.2)</td>
<td>4.5 (0.71)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using harm reduction approach with client*</td>
<td>3.9 (1.1)</td>
<td>4.9 (0.44)</td>
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AIM 3
Adapt and disseminate standardized policies

Integrated this CFAR project into the TGA’s Ending the Epidemic plan
✓ Pillar Two: TREAT
✓ Goal: Improve access to care & treatment to 75% of people with HIV by 2025
✓ Strategy: Increase the effectiveness of CHW workforce in Shelby County – Memphis TGA to support clients with anti-retroviral therapy (ART) adherence to become virally suppressed

- Standardize assessment tools and protocols for CHWs to work with clients
  - County wide assessment form
  - Challenges with implementation
Discussion: Getting to the Next Level

• **Challenges**
  - COVID 19 made things hard
  - Engaging CHWs during COVID
  - Slow uptake to adapt policies to get the R-WISE ((Ryan White Integrated Statewide Eligibility System (RWISE) up and running
  - Staff turnover & training new staff
  - Change in organizational priorities

• **Strategies to address those challenges**
  - Ensuring new staff had access to training (on-line modules)
  - Use of incentives
  - Use monthly coaching sessions
  - Consistency and communication with SCHD grantee’s office
Lessons Learned in the Memphis TGA
Education and Training for Faith Leaders

• Get churches involved to better educate the community.
• Faith leaders should respond positively and supportively when somebody discloses their HIV status.
• One faith leader said, “We can use all of the information and resources if you don't mind having a combined event, let it be about HIV and COVID awareness, we need all of it.”
Standardize Roles & Training for Community Health Workers

• Need to integrate as part of statewide certification program.
• “Educate new community health workers and all staff, not only about the agency, but about the populations that we're serving.”
• “Shadow other staff members to prepare for all possible situations.”
• “The supervisor should have an effective open-door policy so that when there is something that we don't know, we can always go to the supervisor, and she can help us find a process that works best for that client.”
• “Community health worker certification. I think that would be huge.”
Acknowledgements

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• Our CHWs & staff at participating organizations in the Memphis TGA