

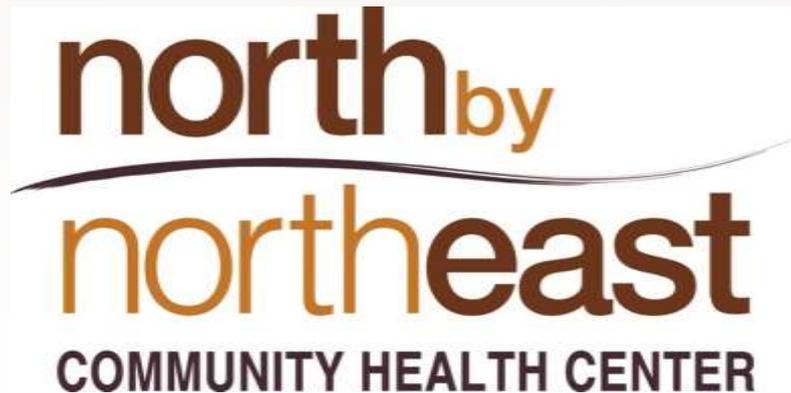
# CLOSING THE GAP: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN THE PREVENTION OF HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

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# Introducing North by Northeast

- Founded in 2005
- Partnership between local pastor and family physician
- Response to neighborhood need
- Mission: to improve health outcomes and advance health equity
- Focus on common chronic conditions
- Privately funded through donations and grants
- Patients all uninsured or Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan)
- Only medical clinic in Oregon focused on African American health



# A population at risk

- Poor; most eligible for Medicaid
- Majority African American
- High prevalence of severe uncontrolled hypertension
- High prevalence of pre-DM and poorly controlled DM



# Barriers to managing chronic disease

- Providers not following evidence-based guidelines
- Patients lack access to care
- Patients lack understanding of disease and need for treatment
- Poor medication adherence
- History of relationship with medical system defined by
  - *Disconnection*
  - *Disappointment*
  - *Distrust*



# Why Community Health Workers?

- Trusted community members
- Many already serving in this role
- Understand barriers and patient perspective
- Knowledge of community resources
- Serve as a “bridge” to health care team



# Roles of CHWs in CVD Prevention

- Health screening
  - Visit health fairs, faith communities, barber shops and other gathering places to screen for high blood pressure and other risk factors
  - Identify individuals in need of further education and services



# Roles of CHWs in CVD Prevention

- Connect community members with health insurance and traditional health services
  - Be knowledgeable about eligibility and community resources
  - Assist with applications
  - Ensure appropriate connections and follow-up



# Roles of CHWs in CVD Prevention

- Education
  - Using culturally appropriate information, educate individuals and groups about CVD risk factors
  - Support adherence to medications and self-management goals
  - Support health behavior changes such as smoking cessation
  - Educate other CHWs in areas of expertise



# Roles of CHWs in CVD Prevention

- Assist with navigation through the health care system
  - Assist with appointment scheduling
  - Provide appointment reminders
  - Connect patients to transportation support
  - Accompany patients to health care visits when needed
  - Provide home visits



# Roles of CHWs in CVD Prevention

- Participate in the health care team
  - Bridging and cultural mediation
  - Education of health care providers about patient perspective and barriers patients may be facing
  - Education of community members to be successful health care consumers



# Lessons Learned

- Know your population and tailor your program to be successful
  - Don't plan to do things you know won't work
- Assess frequently and modify as needed
  - Don't keep doing things that don't work
- CHWs are not miracle workers; keep your expectations reasonable
- State health depts and legislators should take the lead from CHWs and community organizations when developing policy to integrate CHWs into healthcare workforce
- Policy should address financial sustainability (reimbursement), CHW training, competency standards, and program evaluation

Thank you



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