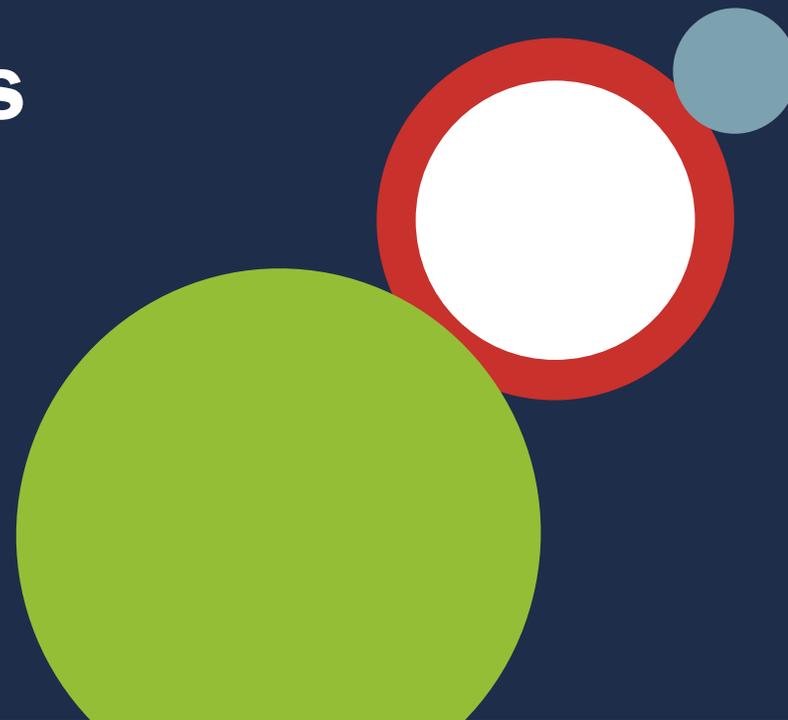


Sustaining Kansas Community Health Workers

A blueprint for action



Purpose of CHWs

- Trusted community members who bridge the gap between local health care and social service systems to the communities they serve
- Provide culturally responsive care, improve access to services and address social drivers of health
- Especially critical in rural areas

Developing a blueprint for action

- In partnership with the Kansas Department of Health And Environment's CHW Section, convened partners from across the state to engage in action planning for CHW sustainability

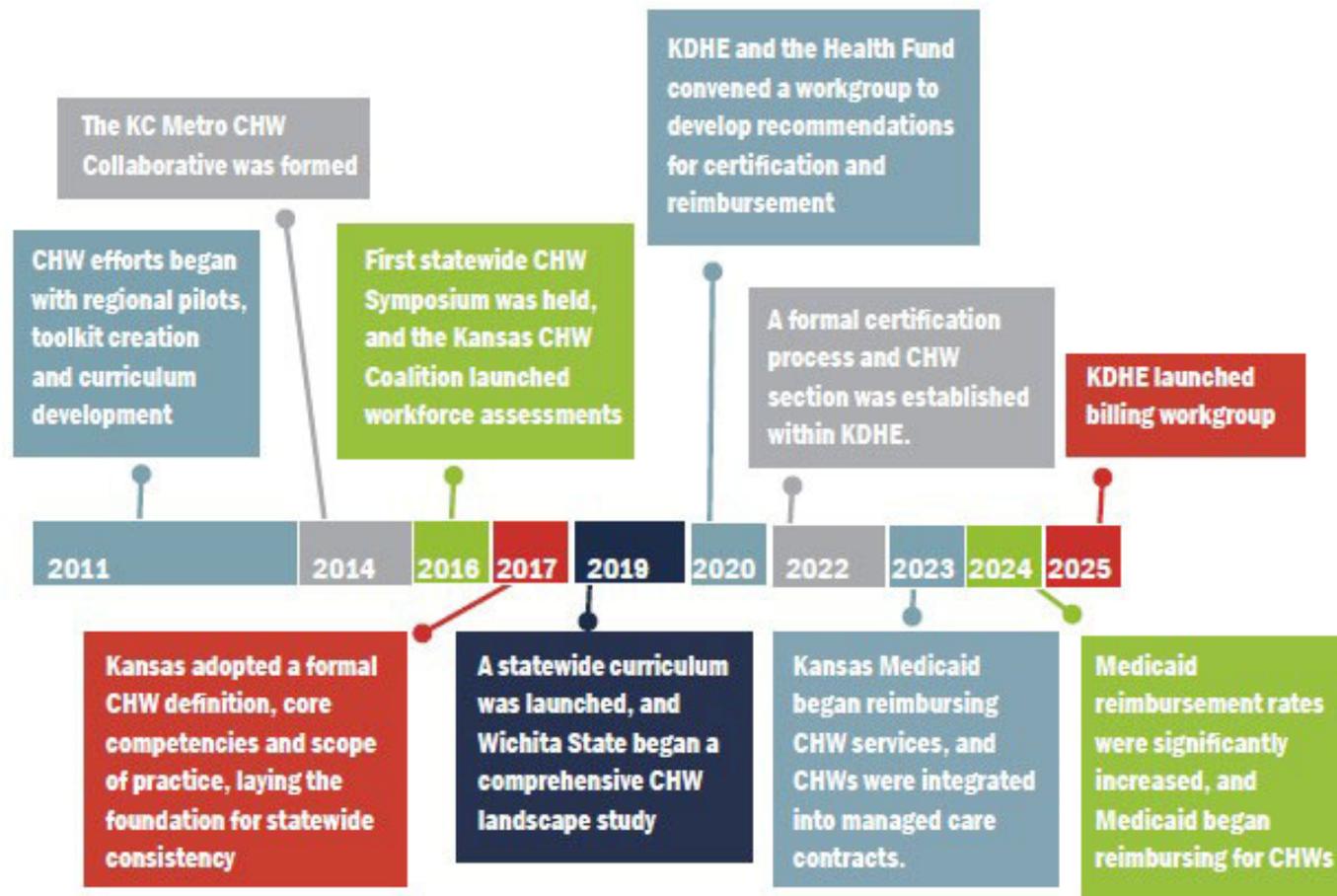


CHW Workforce: Strengths and progress

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- Kansas has made significant strides in building a strong, sustainable CHW workforce
 - Certification and training infrastructure
 - Policy and funding efforts
 - Coalition leadership and collaboration
 - Cross-sector partnerships
 - Workforce diversity and reach

Key milestones for CHW workforce



Key takeaways and findings



1. Financial sustainability

Partners emphasized the need to strengthen financial sustainability for CHWs by improving reimbursement mechanisms, expanding billing capacity across sectors, and diversifying funding sources.

They also highlighted the importance of demonstrating the value of CHWs through data, securing support for coalition infrastructure, and monitoring policy shifts to identify new funding opportunities.

Key takeaways and findings

2. CHW education pathways and certification

Partner recommendations included expanding access to CHW training by offering flexible, streamlined and multilingual curriculum options, along with ongoing support through mentorship, technical assistance and learning opportunities.

Kansas would benefit from a unified, scalable infrastructure to support CHW training, certification and ongoing professional development.

Key takeaways and findings

3. Coalition infrastructure

Recommendations focused on strengthening the Kansas CHW Coalition by fostering regular collaboration among partners, exploring sustainable organizational models, and expanding partnerships at the local, regional and national levels. They also suggested evaluating the Coalition's structure and role, including the potential to serve as a technical assistance provider to other states.

Key takeaways: Financial stability

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

- Work with KDHE and Medicaid to address gaps in existing payment policy, including but not limited to: Allow hospitals and emergency departments to bill for services
- Allow additional providers to supervise CHWs
- Reimburse for care provided in community settings
- Establish reimbursement pathways for community-based organizations employing CHWs
- Monitor Rural Transformation Fund opportunities and recommend state use of these funds to support CHW sustainability and reimbursement
- Support efforts to provide trainings for clinics on how to integrate CHWs into practice and how to bills for services under Medicare and Medicaid

Key takeaways: Financial stability

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LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

- Continue to work with KDHE and Medicaid to address gaps in existing payment policy, including but not limited to: Providers to bill Medicaid for time coordinating resources, documenting, & training
- Universalized billing across provider types
- More sustainable reimbursement rates
- Engage commercial insurers about the benefits of CHWs and return on investment for deploying CHWs and reimbursement for their services
- Continue to partner with philanthropy to advance the profession through project, research, practice integration and infrastructure support

Key takeaways: CHW education pathways and certification

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SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

- Secure funding for CHW competency, Train-the-Trainer and supervisory trainings
- Ensure CHW training curriculum is accessible to learners in various languages and is regularly reviewed for quality, consistency and alignment with the efforts nationally.
- Support development of online registry and tools to track CHW certification, education and continuing education
- Develop technical assistance, learning community supports, and continuing education aimed at addressing burnout and self-care for CHWs
- Continue to develop continuing education models on emerging and innovative topics, like Food is Medicine, and using data to support CHWs, and develop materials to promote all existing continuing education modules

Key takeaways: CHW education pathways and certification

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LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

- Explore tiered CHW specialization or levels and assess how these align with employment opportunities and KS reimbursement models
- Utilize an apprenticeship model (simultaneously work, earn, & learn)
- Support mentor/mentee opportunities
- Pilot trainings with high school sophomores and juniors (e.g., in alternative high schools)

Key takeaways: Coalition infrastructure

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

- Research how other coalitions/associations operate and are sustained in other states (e.g., membership fees, continuing education fees, certification fees, curriculum provider fees) and secure funding
- Develop value statement and seek funding for sustainability of Coalition, including hiring staff
- Explore a credentialing body that supports several disciplines (e.g., CHWs, parent peer support and doulas) to build alignment and stackable credentials and help with backbone support
- Hold regular conversations among careholders to advance priority strategies
- Grow partnerships locally (including with legislators), regionally (Region VII Collab), and nationally
- Explore partnerships to help secure space for the coalition
- Build cohesion across the state
- Develop resources to address challenges with CHW burnout and promote self care

Key takeaways: Coalition infrastructure



LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

- Explore transitioning from a “Coalition” to an “Association” as a more formal, long-term model
- Consider model where Kansas Coalition provides national TA to other states
- Consider creating membership fees beyond individuals, such as organization-level memberships or sponsorships

Looking ahead

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- Most Americans struggle to navigate health care because of the complicated and costly system
- CHWs help patients navigate the system, which results in improved health for patients and reduced costs for the system
- CHWs provide a clear ROI for states; for every dollar state Medicaid programs invest in CHWs, they see \$2.47 in savings
- However, to sustain CHWs there is work ahead for all of us
- To sustain CHWs and achieve the changes laid out in this report, all of us need to work together – CHWs, providers, policymakers payers and philanthropy