



**Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker  
 Training and Certification Advisory Committee**  
**Approved Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, October 30, 2024**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Introductions**

Ms. Otila Garcia, Chair, called the Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Advisory Committee (CHWAC) meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed members and attendees. Ms. Garcia, Chair, reminded committee members to turn on video camera and unmute their mics and state their names each time before offering a comment or asking a question so members of the public know who is speaking. Ms. Garcia, Chair, introduced Ms. Jessica Arevalo to provide logistics and call roll.

Ms. Jessica Arevalo, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO), Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) read the logistical announcements and stated the meeting is conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Neither pre-registered requests for public comment nor written public comments were received. Ms. Arevalo conducted the member roll call and announced that a quorum was established.

**Table 1: The Community Health Worker (CHW) Advisory Committee member attendance at the CHW Advisory Committee Meeting on April 22, 2024.**

MEMBER NAME	IN ATTENDANCE
Ms. Jessica Arriola	No
Ms. Minerva Garcia	Yes
Ms. Otila Garcia, Chair	Yes
Ms. Greg LaMay	Yes
Ms. Jometra Hawkins, Vice Chair	Yes
Ms. Monica Hughes	No
Ms. Belinda Flores	No

Ms. Roxana Lopez	Yes
Mr. Jose L. Rucobo	No

Ms. Garcia, Chair, asked the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) staff attending in person to introduce themselves – Ms. Raiza Ruiz, Manager, Community Health Workers and School Health Branch, Health Promotion Unit; Mr. Brett Spencer, Director, Health Promotion Unit; and Mr. Frank Luera, Program Coordinator, Community Health Worker Program.

**Agenda Item 2: Consideration of July 22, 2024, draft meeting minutes (Part 1 of 2)**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, welcomed Ms. Arevalo who reminded members that the July 22, 2024, draft meeting minutes were provided and asked for any edits or comments to the minutes. Ms. Arevalo requested a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

**MOTION:**

Ms. Arevalo conducted a roll call vote of the committee members. With a unanimous vote of the committee, five approvals, no disapprovals, and no abstentions, the motion has passed.

**Agenda Item 3: Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section update**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, welcomed Ms. Ruiz to provide the updates.

Highlights included:

- General updates:
  - DSHS submitted FY 2026-2026 Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) to the Texas Legislative Budget Board on September 6, 2024, which includes a proposal to add three positions to the CHW program to help with the increase in applications and workload. Approval not guaranteed.
  - CHW Program Policy has been updated and posted on the CHW Program website. Law, Regulation, and Policy page has also been updated. New webpage with standards for CHW and CHWI (CHW Instructors) protected information and guidance for open records requests.
  - Proposal to enhance DSHS Core Competencies approved by DSHS Commissioner, Dr. Jennifer A. Shuford on August 20, 2024. Updates regarding collaboration will be later discussed.
- CHW Program Updates:

- Total CHWs Certified in 2024: 7,790 as of October 30, 2024.
- Highest number of applications received between April and June 2024. Applications have remained constant each month, around 350 to 400, from July to September 2024. Backlog due to increased number of applications. Recommendation to CHWs: submit applications 120 days or greater prior to the certification expiration.
- Most of the CHW applications received so far in 2024 are applications based on training at 2,426 or 56%, followed by renewal applications at 1,075 or 25%, and applications based on experience at 843 or 19%. Increase due to high school certification offered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). 64 school districts currently providing CHW certification course in all health service regions of Texas.
- 1,384 new and renewal applications approved between July and September 2024. 1,037 of 1,384 were newly certified CHWs.
- 670 certified CHWIs as of September 30, 2024. Greatest number of applications received in April and June 2024.
- Most of the CHWI applications received so far in 2024 are renewal applications at 132 or 49%, followed by applications based on training at 101 or 37%, and applications based on experience at 37 or 14%.
- 70 new and renewal applications approved between July and September 2024. 38 of 70 were newly certified CHWIs.
- Curriculums: seven currently under review, totaling 18.5 credit hours. The program has approved 15 new curriculums, totaling 32.5 credit hours, between July and September 2024.

Ms. Belinda Flores has announced that she has joined the meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Update on Collaboration with DSHS Regarding Core Competencies Enhancements**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, welcomed Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Lopez to provide the updates.

Highlights included:

- Ms. Rodriguez provided a background on the CHW Core Consensus, or C3, initiative.
  - C3 Core CHW Competencies, C3 Core CHW Roles, and DSHS Core Competencies were compared. The following C3 Core CHW Roles are focused on, and its language will be incorporated into the existing DSHS Core CHW Competencies:
    - Cultural Meditation Among Individuals, Communities, and Health and Social Service Systems,
    - Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Education and Information, and
    - Participating in Evaluation and Research.
  - CHW Workforce Feedback: multiple listening sessions conducted in partnership with TAPCHW with post-surveys sent to all participants.

Most responses to the survey questions presented were “Strongly Agree.”

- The workgroup’s formal advisory proposal and the proposed changes were presented. Only a few DSHS CHW core competencies needed to be amended and one new competency, Evaluation and Research, was added. The proposal was approved by the DSHS CHWAC to continue the work of scoping, building, and enhancing the changes and updates to the Texas DSHS CHW Core Competencies.
- Ms. Lopez provided a summary of the language changes or enhancements to the existing DSHS CHW Core Competencies.
  - Plan to work with additional CHW stakeholders such as other DSHS CHWAC members, local CHW associations, and individual CHWs/Promotores to gain feedback.
  - Build a timeline for the implementation of the enhanced DSHS CHW core competencies. CHW Program to provide technical support to CHW training centers to accommodate changes and implementation of enhanced competencies.
  - Tentative timeline:
    - September 9, 2024 – March 14, 2025 – Interviews and focus groups.
    - March 2025 – July 2025 – Core Competency Implementation.
    - July 2025 – February 2026 – Non-DSHS Implementation Activities.
    - February 19, 2026 – Enhanced core competencies effective.

## **Discussion**

- Timeline is very high-level and there are several benchmarks in between.
  - September 9, 2024 – March 14, 2025 – Interviews and focus groups: interviews have not yet started. September 9, 2024, began the process to develop the tools for the interviews and focus groups. This timeline also includes developing a report based on the interviews and focus groups.

## **Agenda Item 2: Consideration of July 22, 2024, draft meeting minutes (Part 2 of 2)**

Retake the vote for the minutes. Motion was not requested in the initial vote. Ms. Arevalo requested a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

### **MOTION:**

Ms. Flores motioned to accept the draft minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. LaMay. Ms. Arevalo conducted a roll call vote of the committee members. With a unanimous vote of the committee, six approvals, no disapprovals, and no abstentions, the motion has passed.

## **Agenda Item 5: Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Promotoras de Salud: Leveraging Technology for Community Empowerment**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, welcomed Dr. Leticia Villarreal Sosa, Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Development, Acting Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Professor of School of Social Work at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (RGV) to share information about a project that was implemented on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Promotoras de Salud: Leveraging Technology for Community Empowerment.

Highlights included:

- Dr. Villarreal Sosa provided background information about the project and team members and their roles.
  - The South Texas Promotoras/es Association (STPA) serves the RGV, a community along the U.S.-Mexico border that is a 94% Hispanic/Latino community. They are underserved and in need of access to culturally responsive, evidence-based mental health services. CHWs are a key resource to help the community access mental health services and are lay members that serve as vital bridges between vulnerable communities and health care system.
- STPA's long term goal is to increase access to mental health services for those in need in RGV. The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of AI/ML and mental health training for Promotores and develop and evaluate a pilot project focused on using AI/ML to identify predictors for depression and/or anxiety; and information a small community-based health education intervention.
- AI and other digital and mobile technologies can extend the reach of Promotoras, enhancing efforts to disseminate health information, coaching, identifying mental health issues, and bridge access to care. This project can help decrease health disparities and ensure early detection and intervention.
- AI and ML are explained including the advantages and disadvantages or limitations.
- Demographics of the Promotores that received the training on AI, ML, and neural networks.

## **Agenda Item 6: Advisory subcommittee updates**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, reminded and encouraged members who are not yet part of a subcommittee to join at least one. Each subcommittee may have up to four members and three non-members. There are openings in the CHW Training and Certification subcommittee.

Highlights included:

### **A. Workforce Solutions and Employment Opportunities Sub-Committee**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, welcomed Ms. Hawkins, Sub-Committee Chair, Workforce Solutions and Employment Opportunities Sub-Committee, to provide the updates.

Highlights included:

- Meeting to discuss opportunities to help the workforce move along did not have great attendance. Struggles to create ideas and implement information for the subcommittee. Discussion needed to determine the future of the sub-committee.
- Ms. Garcia, Chair, requested to hold questions until after the updates from the communication and Outreach Sub-Committee.

### **B. Communication and Outreach Sub-Committee**

On behalf of Ms. Arriola, Mr. Luera reported that there were no updates for the Communication and Outreach Sub-Committee.

#### **Discussion**

- Lack of participation in sub-committees and causing burden on some Chairs and members. Requesting feedback from CHWAC members regarding the relevance of sub-committees.
- Suggestion to place sub-committee(s) on standby until topics/issues relevant to a sub-committee arise then the sub-committee(s) can change to an active status.
- More guidance needed on how to join a sub-committee for members and non-members and present the importance of the sub-committee to non-members to join.
- Suggestion for Communication and Outreach sub-committee to stay active to notify CHW of CHWAC meetings to increase participation.
- **Provide a summary of all sub-committees to members.** More discussion needed prior to voting or deciding the future of sub-committees.
- CHWAC member orientation packets should include guidance on how to join sub-committees. To join a sub-committee, please notify Committee Liaison, Mr. Luera.

#### **Agenda Item 7: Committee member sharing**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, opened the floor for members to share information from their regions including best practices, exciting news, or projects.

Highlights included:

- Ms. Hawkins working with Umemba Health to create free virtual learning in Houston, Region 4/5 South about Continuing Care and Coordinated Care and How CHWs can work in the clinical setting. Please contact Ms. Hawkins for more information.
- Ms. Lopez shared that she is a co-instructor at the training center of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing. Offers to upscale certified CHW via online course, 45-person capacity, 50-60 curriculum hours based on emergency preparedness, public health essentials, oral health, and more. More info will be provided when possible.

- Ms. Flores shared that Corpus Christi had their first CHW association meeting last night to share resources. Next meeting planned for December and to meet monthly thereafter. Many CHWs were not previously aware of the many resources in the area. About 40 CHW in attendance.
- Ms. Garcia, Chair, shared that the STPA Get it D.O.N.E conference in South Padre Island had over 240 participants and thanked all for attending.

### **Agenda Item 8: Public comment**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Arevalo announced that there no pre-registered requests for comments and no written comments were received. None on-site for public comments.

### **Agenda Item 9: Agenda items for next meeting**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, asked for suggestions for the next agenda items.

- American Public Health Association (APHA) CHW Meeting update.
- Discuss opportunities for CHWs and Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements.
- Advisory Sub-committee Discussion and Voting.
- Updates from recipients of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to upscale and train CHW. Ms. Lopez to provide update at next meeting.

### **Agenda Item 10: Adjourn**

Ms. Garcia, Chair, announced the next CHWAC meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2025, and thanked all in attendance for joining the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 am.

Below is the link to the archived video of the July 22, 2024, Community Health Worker Advisory Committee meeting to view and listen for, two years from date meeting is posted and in accordance with the DSHS records retention schedule. (To view and listen to the entirety of the meeting click on the link below)

[Promotor\(a\) or Community Health Worker \(CHW\) Training and Certification Advisory Committee.](#)