



## Virginia CHW News & Updates

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# CALL TO



# ACTION

### YOUR SIGN-ON NEEDED TO EXPAND AND SUSTAIN CHW WORKFORCE

Thanks to the efforts of a broad coalition of advocates, Congress is increasingly recognizing the potential of community health workers in public health and health equity. A bipartisan group of lawmakers – Rep. Deutch (D-FL), Rep. Engel (D-NY), Rep. Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Senator Casey (D-PA), Senator Smith (D-MN), Senator Booker (D-NJ) and Senator Brown (D-OH) – have drafted [letters](#) to urge Secretary Alex Azar of the Department of Health and Human Services to more fully deploy community health workers in response to COVID-19, long-term improvement of public health, and lasting economic recovery.

In order to ensure that Secretary Azar hears from a diverse and enthusiastic group of lawmakers, your support is essential. **First, please email [Dr. Shreya Kangovi](#) to have your organization's name added as a supporter of the letter. Second, please consider sending a short message to your member of Congress and your Senators to ask them to sign these letters before the end of September.** If you are not sure which member of Congress represents you, you can find out by entering your zip code [here](#) and you can also review a list of Senators by state [here](#).

*This content provided by The Penn Center for Community Health Workers. For more information on this issue go to this [link](#).*

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## COVID-19 in Virginia

The Virginia Department of Health is constantly updating its COVID-19 resource and tracking website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/> Please continue to visit the site for the latest information and guidance.

## In this issue:

1. Danville, VA Named All-America City - CHW Program Highlighted
2. James Madison University's Promotores de Salud Program
3. Update: Strategic Plan Workgroup Progress
4. Virginia CHW Association Offers Virginia CHWs Chronic Disease "Toolkit"
5. October 28 at 2:00 p.m. is next Council Meeting
6. Links to Virginia CHW Association Resources
7. CHW Webinar and Online Resources: Public Health Training Centers, Webinar on Declaring Racism a Public Health Emergency
8. Research Corner: CHWs and Whole Person Care

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**! New CHW Certification Process Now in Effect !**  
**Learn More [Here](#)**

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*"We have re-imagined the way things are and the way things work."*

### **Danville named All-America City with application that highlighted CHW Program. Roanoke was also a finalist that included CHWs Assisting in Coordination of Care**

The headline quote comes from Marlo Burton, a CHW with the CHW Project in Danville, when interviewed by Parker Cotton of the Danville Register and Bee Newspaper. Danville was one of ten cities to receive the prestigious award from the National Civic League. The CHW project also includes Pittsylvania County, VA, and Caswell County, NC.

According to the Register and Bee [article](#), "Danville's application highlighted three specific local efforts to enhance health and well-being through civic engagement. That group includes Youth Health Equity Leadership Institute (YHELI) which helps high school students graduate on time and plan for the future; the Danville Parks and Recreation Fit Mobile program, which offers on-site fitness and nutrition classes around the city; **and the Community Health Worker initiative, which works to improve residents' access to health care and social services** (emphasis added)." The CHW Project in Danville has CHWs working in the [Piedmont Access to Community Health](#), a Federally Qualified Health Center and, [Gateway Health Alliance](#), a regional provider network. You can read about Danville's application to the National Civic League [here](#).

The City of Roanoke was also a finalist for All-America City. Its entry included Healthy Roanoke Valley's HUB Pathways model highlighted in the Council's [April newsletter](#). The application also highlighted community-based health clinics in Roanoke. The [National Civic League](#) described Healthy Roanoke Valley HUB Pathways program as having "brought together executives from the city's health safety net to address the obstacles keeping their neighbors from receiving quality care. The Pathways Hub pairs those at greatest risk with neighborhood-based community care workers (CHWs) who work with them to coordinate their care. Pathways might include "prescriptions" for healthy foods,

rides to the doctor's office, exercise, or techniques to manage diabetes. Since its inception, more than 249 community members have participated in the program with promising results."

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## **Promotores de Salud: 20 years of serving the Hispanic Community in the Central Shenandoah Valley Region Turns to COVID-19 Education**



*Community Health Program Coordinator, Liana Penalver*

The following article in its entirety can be found on the [James Madison University News website](#).

For 20 years, the Promotores de Salud Program has trained Hispanic women and men to be lay health resource persons (Promotores) in their community through a 40-hour training program that educates the Promotores in Spanish about a variety of important health topics. The Promotores then share their new knowledge with others by performing health encounters, such as distributing and explaining health literature or participating in community health fairs.

By sharing accurate information in ways that are culturally appropriate, Promotores help to reduce health disparities and make healthy living a possibility for members of the community. Since mid-March of 2020, Penalver has been in communication with the Promotores to help them discern between misinformation and factual information concerning the novel coronavirus and the COVID-19 disease. The Promotores have been warned to be wary about the information they receive from the internet that does not derive from an accredited source.

To further the Promotores' understanding of the pandemic, several resources of health education materials have been shared with them through webinars, conference calls, links to articles from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Virginia Department of Health, brochures and flyers. All of which offer content regarding COVID-19 symptoms and information on how to minimize the spread of the outbreak. Penalver has also been working with other members of the Latino community through Facebook and WhatsApp. Many of these community members have reached out to her to inquire about where they can go for food. They have been directed to food pantries and local schools that are offering food to the public.

During April of 2020, Promotores de Salud was informed of a family in the Harrisonburg community that tested positive for COVID-19. Promotores de Salud quickly responded to the needs of the family and successfully connected them with groceries from local food pantries and information on how to access support available to them in their area. Intertwined with these efforts to disseminate health education pertaining to the pandemic, Promotores de Salud has made mental health a focus as well. Promotores de Salud is partnering with Migrant Education Program, Central Shenandoah Health District, and Community Services Board to present on "Building Resilience" and "Protecting your

Family during COVID-19" via two virtual webinar workshops for parents to be held on May 18, 2020 for English speakers and May 25, 2020 for Spanish speakers.

Promotores de Salud is a program of the [Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services](#) at JMU's [College of Health and Behavioral Studies](#)." For more information on the Promotores de Salud Program contact Liliana Penalver at [penalvlx@jmu.edu](mailto:penalvlx@jmu.edu).

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## Strategic Plan Workgroup to Present Draft Plan to Council on October 28

After five meetings, the Strategic Plan Workgroup will present its strategic draft to the Council on October 28. The timeframe of the Plan covers two years, from July 2020 through June 2022. The Workgroup has recommended two goals with each goal having several objectives with action steps to achieve each goal. Upon adoption by the full Council, the Plan will assist the Council's three Committees in setting their work agendas through June 2022.



## Virginia CHW Association Offering Virginia CHWs Chronic Disease "Toolkit"

The Virginia Community Health Worker Association (VACHWA) is pleased to offer a CHW Toolkit to community health workers (CHWs) in Virginia. The kit is designed to help CHWs enrich their conversations about health and wellness and resources for diabetes and chronic disease literacy.



The toolkit is part of VACHWA's Health and Education Program sponsored by a Virginia Department of Health Innovate grant. The toolkit comes in a handy travel bag and will contain a pill dispenser, a pedometer, a magnifying glass, a glucose monitor\*, and a blood pressure monitor\* (\*items on a loaner system). **To receive a toolkit, CHWs should complete our intake form and reserve a kit [here](#).** Toolkits will be distributed starting in mid-September.

For further information about the VACHWA Toolkit Program, please contact Marian Turk, VACHWA Outreach Coordinator, at [info@chwofva.com](mailto:info@chwofva.com).

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### Mark Your Calendars For the Development Council meeting.

October 28, 2020 is the next meeting of the Virginia CHW Workforce Development Council. These are open meetings and we encourage CHWs, CHW supervisors, and stakeholders interested in the workforce to attend. If you have not received a calendar invite, please mark your



calendars for the afternoon and send us an email at [cnye@institutephi.org](mailto:cnye@institutephi.org) so that we make sure you are on the list!

## Virginia CHW Association Launches Interactive Map

The VACHWA has built a program directory map at <https://chwofva.com/resources-map/>. Help the Association and the CHW workforce across Virginia build a complete map by letting the Association and the CHW Workforce Development Council know about your CHW program.



## The Virginia CHW Association



The Virginia Community Health Worker Association wants to hear from all CHWs. Contact the Association by clicking on the hands logo.

## CHW Webinar and Online Resources

### Public Health Education Centers offer webinars and online training for CHWs

Are you a CHW (regardless of certification status) and looking for continuing education resources? There are [ten regional training centers](#) across the United States, and all offer training and educational resources. The Centers operate within public health schools and programs. They provide specialized training for public health students and workers. The trainings focus on building technical, leadership, and scientific skills. Among the extensive training and education offerings, many are designed for CHWs.

Each Center's website is accessible regardless of what region you reside. Registration is required for online trainings. The trainings are free. There are archived webinars that may not require registration. For online trainings, the Centers offer a certificate of completion once the user completes a post-test. **Certified CHWs can submit certificates to the Virginia Certification Board as evidence for the 30 hours (over two years) of continuing education requirements for CHW recertification.**

**National Association for Chronic Disease Directors - [Declaring Racism a Public Health Emergency: What does that mean?](#)** "In recent months, many states have taken the bold step of confronting racism by declaring it as a public health crisis, emergency, or issue. The NACDD Health Equity Council understands that this declaration can be interpreted in many ways. In this webinar, our expert panel will:

- Examine existing data to combat the emergency.
- Explore and define the meaning of this official declaration.
- Identify the tools we have at our disposal to combat the crisis."

### **Supporting the Integration of Community Health Workers in Whole Person Care Pilots (Oct. 2019)**

"While Whole Person Care (WPC) has provided an opportunity for its grantees to develop innovative models in care coordination, there is also potential for greater CHW employment outside of and beyond the pilot programs. Regions and organizations serving the underserved that did not apply for and/or did not receive WPC funding could also benefit from CHW employment. A unique aspect of the CHW role, and one responsible for its immense value, is CHWs' ability to understand and thoughtfully respond to each patient's particular circumstances and needs. This CHW skill demonstrates CHW hiring potential across almost any region or organization where there is a need to meet the health and social needs of difficult-to-reach populations."

[Read the University of California San Francisco Article](#)