

# KANSAS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER COALITION

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# February

## SPOTLIGHT: MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL HEAD START PROGRAM

**LYNETTE FOWLER, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR**  
**SANDRA REECE-TINSLEY, HEALTH AND NUTRITION MANAGER**

When the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Head Start Program added community health workers to their team, they envisioned CHWS connecting with families to not only help meet their individual needs, but to walk through the process with families. MARC Head Start serves 2,400 kids across three counties in the Kansas City, Missouri area. The two community health workers are referred to as the "foot soldiers" who support families through teaching them to use public transportation, install car seats, navigate the health care system, and so much more.

These CHWs have undergone significant training to become certified in various skills, such as: bilingual certification, car seat technician certification, the family development credential program, and more. This education is helpful, but perhaps the most special aspect of these CHWs is the fact that they were once Head Start parents themselves. Like other CHWs, MARC's CHWs deeply understand the community they serve, because they have been in their shoes.

At MARC, Head Start kids and their families are first served by Advocates who support them in making goals, makes referrals, and supports health needs. But sometimes, a family faces extra barriers or has a more difficult time making progress on their goals. This is where a CHW comes in to connect with the family and provide extra support. One story that resonates with Lynette and Sandra was one of their CHWs helped a mother and her six kids who hadn't been able to go to the doctor in two years go. The CHW was their for every step - from getting the kids ready to go to the waiting room.

Head Start and its CHWs have empowered families in their health, education, and workforce skills. Lynette and Sandra believes their program's CHWs are some of the most staunch supporters for their clients and Head Start. In return, parents who have received services are advocates too. At a recent national Head Start conference, a group of parents who received workforce development training through Head Start spoke on what they learned and received a standing ovation. Another small group of parents traveled to DC to talk to their senators about the value of Head Start and used the opportunity to talk about other issues important to them, such as foster care or protecting DACA. The work of CHWs not only supports families needs, but empowers them to use their own voice to better their communities.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Every Mom Thrives: Supporting Perinatal Behavioral Health Regional Event

Perinatal behavioral health disorders are a leading cause of maternal mortality. Join Kansas Connecting Communities for their next regional training at the Neosho Regional Medical Center in Chanute, KS on Thursday, March 5th. This *free* training will build skills to implement mental health and substance use screening, referral, and treatment support in your organization. CEUs and travel stipends available. For more information, check out the [flyer](#) or the [registration page](#).



## Governor's Public Health Conference

Registration is now open for the annual conference in Wichita, KS from March 31 to April 2! [Click here](#) to see the agenda, keynote speakers, breakout topics, and register!



## Happy Black History Month!

February is Black History Month! This month is a great reminder to acknowledge, appreciate, and engage with Black history, culture, literature, and more. Check out African American historian and anti-racist scholar, Dr Ibram X Kendi's [educational reading list](#) full of memoirs, historical context, and reflections to help us grow and become better advocates for Black communities and clients.

The Office of Minority Health is using this month to raise awareness about the health disparities that African Americans face, which includes being more likely to have high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. One way to combat these health risks is to live a more active lifestyle. [Check out OMH's Black History Month page](#) for further readings, resources, and information!



# IN THE NEWS

## How Online Grocery Delivery Could Help Alleviate Food Deserts

Kansas Public Radio recently posted an article about an innovative way to support those who live in food deserts and face food insecurity. In cities across America, there is a program that is already in place that has the potential to make change in these people's lives: online grocery delivery. Currently, SNAP is piloting an online grocery shopping and delivery program that can be used with an EBT card. In this pilot, 93% of households in urban food deserts can access a grocery store that will deliver to their home. While SNAP can not currently be used for delivery fees, it is hopeful that this study may lead to a nationwide online grocery shopping program for SNAP - where delivery can be paid for. While these kinks need to be worked out, there is also a gap in serving rural food deserts with this type of service, because online delivery is often not as available. [Click here to learn more!](#) How can our communities utilize this idea now and potentially in the future?



## CHWs Provide Vital Care and Peer Support for Vulnerable Michiganders

"The crux of CHW work is relationship. They use the relationship they have with their community to foster an environment where clients can successfully address social determinants of health (and) things that happen outside of the health clinic." Check out this article about how CHWs in Michigan are making profound impacts with survivors of domestic violence, bridging health care, and changing lives. The article also discusses their work certification and sustainable funding. [Read more!](#)



## Op-Ed by Community Health Worker Advocates for the Uninsured & Undocumented

A CHW in New Jersey recently used her voice and experience to write an op-ed advocating for undocumented folks who are uninsured. In this article, Rosas Garcia not only makes a financial case for why we should advocate for this group, but also emphasizes that the ability for undocumented people to access care creates a thriving community and is the just thing to do. [Check out her powerful op-ed here!](#)

# TELL YOUR STORY

We are collecting Community Health Worker success stories and want to know yours. Please take a moments to share so that we can raise awareness of CHWs in Kansas.

[Click here to share your story!](#)



## Acknowledgements:

- Olivia Borland, Community Engagement Institute
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# COMMITTEE UPDATES

The **Advocacy Committee** discussed recent advocacy presentations. They spent most of the meeting conducting strategic planning activities related to the work of the advocacy committee. Their next meeting is **Tuesday, March 10 at 11:00 am.**

The **Education Committee** continued conversations around the CHW Education pilot project. They reviewed the curriculum of a syllabus from a Missouri education program and what aspects they believe would be useful or not to adapt for a Kansas program. They also discussed ideas about a service-learning component and education about billing in the curriculum. They ended their meeting discussing marketing the program and a grant they are applying for to fund the program.

Their next meeting is **Tuesday, March 17 at 3:00 pm.**

The **Executive Committee** delved into ideas about activities and strategies for each focus area of the strategic plan. They reviewed what to include in the CHW Coalition Success Letter and discussed potential revisions to the KCHWC Website based on feedback received. A Certification Task Force has been created and will begin to meet to further this work.

Their next meeting is **Wednesday, March 4 at 1:00 PM**

The **Sustainability Committee** discussed alternative methods of billings for CHWs, including progress around the possible utilization of a National Provider Identifier for CHWs. They heard a presentation from Dr. Cure about performance measures and data. They ended with a discussion about ways to ensure sustainability of the coalition. Their next meeting is **Tuesday, March 24 at 2:00 PM.**

The **Symposium Committee** recently met to continue planning the symposium. They discussed a potential keynote speaker and decided how to structure the agenda for the day. They also discussed a process for asking and receiving RFPs. Their next meeting is **Monday, March 16 at 10:00 AM.**

Want to review the notes? [Click here](#) to find all of the documents you need!



@kschwcoalition