People experiencing homelessness represent a population vulnerable to health disparities. Jae Edgar Bennett developed Street Medicine KC (SMKC) to decrease disparities the unhoused population experiences. As a former provider that has also experienced homelessness, Bennett brought a unique perspective and motivation for the development of SMKC. The organization’s goal is to ensure access to health care and social services for Kansas City’s unhoused community and at-risk populations.

Bennett hopes to provide more housing and get people off the streets. He recounted a particular resonating story of helping someone gain housing, "We recently got someone off the streets that had experienced homelessness for 25 years. It took a community and luck to make it happen." However, Bennett’s work is not without obstacles. He pointed to collaboration and funding as potential barriers because it can be challenging to navigate different systems. SMKC relies on partnerships and community efforts to support the unhoused community’s diverse needs, from receiving behavioral health services to obtaining a birth certificate.
CHW Document Resource Center

The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) has a CHW Document Resource on their website. This resource center has a searchable collection of documents on policies around CHWs (mainly on the state level). The documents are geared towards organizations, funders, state officials, and CHW leaders. The main use of the resource center is to find information on the process states have gone through in advancing policies around CHWs. The NACHW does offer tools to inform and improve your individual practice if you are a NACHW Member.

CDC Resources for CHWs, CHRs, & Promotores de la Salud

The CDC has created a resource page to provide CHWs, CHRs, and Promotores de la Salud support for their work, and to inform their employers to best ensure the safety of CHWs in the community. The resources include six main focus areas: personal protection and safety, adapting practices for COVID-19, training and support, information for employers, stress and coping, and communication tools. You can find the website here.

NACHW COVID-19 Resources

The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) has been promoting the role of CHWs in the public health response to COVID-19 through the development of articles and resources.

A few examples of resources included on the NACHW COVID-19 Resource page are:

- COVID-19 Essentials
- Graphics
- Resources to Help CHWs
- Equity resources and support
COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Advocacy & Sustainability Committee held their first joint meeting. The committees discussed interest in developing and giving a presentation on the role of CHWs for potential employers. Additionally, Unite Us and the Children’s health Learning Network want to support CHWs. KDHE is in talks with the United Health Ministries to develop a sustainable pathway for CHWs via payments and credentialing. The workforce assessment is planned to launch Jan. 15th. The committees will meet again on Tuesday, Jan. 19th at 1:30 PM (3rd Tuesdays).

The Education Committee did not hold a meeting this month. The committee will reconvene on Tuesday, Jan. 19th at 3:00 PM (3rd Tuesdays).

The Executive Committee discussed developing a timeline to share KCHWC’s yearly progress. A grant was submitted to KHF to hire two volunteer CHWs. KS Breastfeeding Coalition presented about CHWs. The committee held a discussion around developing and understanding land acknowledgements. They will meet again on Wednesday, Jan. 6th at 1:00 PM (1st Wednesdays).

The Symposium Committee did not hold a meeting this month and will reconvene on Monday, Jan. 18th at 10:00 AM (3rd Mondays).

All are welcome to attend the Advocacy/Sustainability, Education, and Symposium committee meetings. There are no requirements. The meetings are regularly occurring as listed.
If you are interested in attending or learning more, please contact us.