

Minnesota CHW Curriculum

The Minnesota Community Health Worker curriculum is based on the **core competencies** that are identified in Minnesota's CHW "Scope of Practice." The curriculum also incorporates **health promotion competencies** as an introduction to a broad range of individual, family and population health needs. The internship is the centerpiece of the curriculum's **practice competencies**. It enables CHW students to fully apply and integrate what they have learned in the program to ensure an effective transition to the CHW role.

PHASE 1 -- Role of the CHW - Core Competencies (9 credits)

1. Role, Advocacy and Outreach

- Credits = 2 credits in classroom
- Description: This course focuses on the role of the community health workers personal safety, self care, and personal wellness and the promotion of health and disease prevention for clients.
- Objectives:
 - Define scope of practice for community health worker
 - Identify and use 9-1-1 system appropriately and ethically
 - List personal safety strategies
 - Create a personal safety plan
 - Identify and recognize signs of stress
 - Identify and utilize coping strategies for managing stress and staying healthy
 - Define outreach and identify ways to connect with community
 - Identify strategies to provide clear, accurate agency information to clients in the community
 - Define advocacy
 - Discuss strategy for effective advocacy work

2. Organization and Resources: Community and Personal Strategies

- Credits = 1 credit classroom
- Description: The course focuses on the community health worker's knowledge of the community and the ability to prioritize and organize work. Emphasis is on the use and critical analysis of resources and on problem solving.
- Objectives:
 - Identify ways to gather information about community resources
 - Prioritize client information into an effective plan or time line
 - List benefits of time management
 - Analyze own time management style and present to others
 - Identify sources of current information about health issues
 - Find information on cultural beliefs
 - Discuss ways to use information to promote health of self, families and clients
 - Define critical thinking; discuss critical thinking as it relates to the community health worker role

3. Teaching and Capacity Building

- Credits = 2 classroom credits

- Description: This course focuses on the community health worker role in teaching and increasing capacity of the community and of the client to access the health care system. Emphasis is on establishing healthy lifestyles and clients developing agreements to take responsibility for achieving health goals. Students will learn and practice methods for planning, developing and implementing plans with clients to promote wellness.
- Objectives:
 - Collect client data specific to healthy behaviors, safety and psychosocial issues.
 - Provide clients with information based on individual needs and desires.
 - Construct a contract with clients that promote health care and social responsibility.
 - Develop a list of community resources to act as incentives for clients' health goals.
 - Utilize a variety of teaching strategies with clients.
 - Construct health promotion activities to address community needs.
 - Employ effective communication skills when collaborating with client and other members of service team.
 - Act as a role model for clients regarding self-care and healthy behaviors.

4. Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

- Credits = 1 classroom credit
- Description: This course focuses on the legal and ethical dimensions of the community health worker role. Included are boundaries of the CHW position, agency policies, confidentiality, liability, mandatory reporting and cultural issues that can influence legal and ethical responsibilities.
- Objectives:
 - Define policy and explain why they are important and what implications of policy are.
 - Define confidentiality, HIPPA and ethical aspects of confidentiality.
 - Explain principles of a helping relationship.
 - Define role of community health worker and boundaries of community health worker.
 - Describe legal responsibility of community health worker in mandatory reporting.
 - Discuss cultural brokering.
 - Discuss impact of culture in the context of full disclosure.
 - Define liability and malpractice.
 - Discuss how ethics influence the care of clients.

5. Coordination, Documentation, and Reporting

- Credits = 1 classroom credit
- Description: This module focuses on the importance and ability of the CHW to gather, document and report on client visits and other activities. The emphasis is on appropriate, accurate and clear documentation with consideration of legal and agency requirements
- Objectives:
 - List types of forms that comprise a client record
 - Explain what kinds of information must be included in client record
 - State reasons for timeliness of documentation and its practical applications
 - Accurately uses health care terminology in client record
 - Create and maintain records following legal principles when documenting
 - Identify, create and maintain organized system of community resources

6. Communication and Cultural Competence

- Credits = 2 classroom credits
- Description: This course provides the content and skills in communication to assist the Community Health Worker in effectively interacting with a variety of clients, their families and a range of healthcare providers. Included are verbal/non-verbal communication, listening and interviewing skills, networking, building trust and working in teams. Communication skills are grounded within the context of the community's culture and the cultural implications that can affect client communication.

- Objectives:
 - Use a range of effective communication skills to interact with clients and provide accurate and relevant information/documentation.
 - Interact effectively within the community and its culture by building trust, being culturally responsive and working within diverse team settings.
 - Network within the community and throughout the healthcare system to provide needed services and resources for clients and their families.

Phase 2 -- Role of the CHW - Health Promotion Competencies (3 credits)

1. Healthy Lifestyles

This course focuses on the knowledge and skills a CHW needs to assist clients in realizing healthy eating patterns, controlling their weight, integrating exercise into their lives, taking their medications, talking with their health providers, controlling substances such as tobacco, managing stress, achieving life balance and attaining personal and family wellness. Emphasis is on learning strategies that can be used to aid in client awareness, their education and incorporation of health into their daily lives. This course also provide information and activities in which the CHW can assimilate these concepts into their own lives.

2. Heart Disease & Stroke

This course focuses on CHWs working with clients and community members in preventing heart disease and stroke as well as working with those who already have heart disease or have experienced a heart attack or stroke. Emphasized is an understanding of the physiology of the heart, risk factors and warning signs for heart disease and stroke, emotional and socio-economic impact of heart disease and stroke and common treatments. Also included are strategies for CHWs to work with clients on prevention, achieving healthy lifestyles and accessing needed resources.

3. Maternal, Child and Teen Health

This course emphasizes the needs and requirements to support the health of mothers, children and teens. Emphasis is on knowledge and skills related to the stages of motherhood including pregnancy and prenatal care, labor and delivery, the post-partum experience and the cultural implications of birthing. Also included are the benefits of breastfeeding and the nutritional needs of mothers and infants. Emphasis is also on the healthy development of the child from infancy through adolescence including developmental stages and their tasks. Issues such as sexuality, family planning, sexually-transmitted diseases, substance abuse and domestic violence as well as the resources needed by mothers and their children are also discussed.

4. Diabetes

This course focuses on the role of the CHW in working with clients with diabetes. Emphasis is on understanding diabetes, its risk factors, signs and diagnoses and its long term complications. Strategies for assisting diabetic clients with balancing their lives to achieve the highest level of wellness is a primary focus. The role of the CHW in diabetes prevention, control, resource identification and education is also included.

5. Cancer

This course focuses on the role of the CHW when working with cancer patients and their families. Emphasis is on understanding cancer, its risk factors, screening and tests for detection and diagnosis, and the types of cancer treatments. Understanding the emotional factors involved in a cancer diagnosis and its treatment as well as cultural considerations are included. Also covered is the role of CHWS to help identify resources, facilitate client access to those resources as well as give aid and support to cancer clients and their families.

6. Oral Health

This course focused on a broad range of topics needed to understand and promote oral health. Included are dental anatomy, infection control, oral hygiene instruction and care plus a guide for parents, use of fluoride and dental caries prevention as well as nutrition required for good oral health. Access to dental coverage for dental care and oral health

is covered along with the identification of resources that can be provided by CHWs to promote optimal levels of oral health for their clients, their families and in their communities.

7. Mental Health

This course provides CHWs with an introduction to mental health and illness. Emphasis is on the CHW role in promoting mental health across cultures and decreasing the stigma of mental illness. Specific knowledge and skills focus on recognizing possible signs of mental illness and early intervention, being aware of the ethical and legal aspects of working with clients with mental illness, identifying mental health resources, referring clients and assisting them with access to resources. This course also provides opportunities for the CHW to promote the mental health of self, clients, families and communities.

Phase 3 -- Practice Competencies - Internship (2 credits)

1. Internship

- Credits =2 credits
- Description: 72-80 hours of supervised practical experience that allows opportunities for the student to prepare for independent work in the Community Health Worker (CHW) role.
- Objectives: During the internship, the student will:
 - Review agency policies related to the role of Community Health Worker
 - Integrate content from CHW classes into the Internship experience
 - Work within agency program/design to participate in some aspect(s) of the CHW role. (Mentor considers student's background and abilities and works with student to meet course objectives.)
 - Promote personal safety and safety of client.
 - Adhere to agency policies, such as confidentiality.