

**MetroHealth Medical Center**

**RESEARCH DAY 2023**

**Abstract Submission Form**

**Poster Title:** Conducting a community health worker capacity building collaborative needs assessment in the state of Ohio.

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**Location of Laboratory:** Rammelkamp 204A

**Category:** PHERI/Health Care Research

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Community health workers (CHWs) fill gaps in the public health sector, especially in underserved populations. CHWs possess a unique ability to relate to and build trust with communities to improve clinical outcomes. In Ohio, sustaining CHW positions has been challenging due to limited funding and lack of infrastructure that fosters workforce growth and expansion. This has been due in part to poor awareness of CHWs and their roles, cost prohibitive training and certification opportunities for populations earning low incomes, and an underutilized and complex reimbursement system. In 2022, The MetroHealth System, a safety-net hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, received a grant utilize a collaborative effort to recruit, train, and employ CHWs in underserved communities, while increasing diversity in the public health workforce.

We established an advisory board of academic institutions, local organizations, and stakeholders to identify curriculum enhancements needed to incorporate Public Health and CHW core competencies. We deployed a survey to statewide partners and CHWs to help determine priority areas for training and developed an onboarding process for employers. CHWs and their care teams will receive training in quality improvement to encourage team building and drive process and outcome improvement, addressing social determinants of health, and professional development to improve satisfaction and retention. Increasing the number of trained CHWs and improving job retention will provide more resources to connect underserved populations with care and services. We will address barriers for CHWs training, work with employers to address suboptimal compensation, to optimize retention rates, reduce burnout, and strengthen the CHW workforce.