

Whatcom Community Health Workers' Network
Convened by the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
October 26, 2018
At Lummi Nation Administration building, Kwina Rd, Lummi Nation

Present:

Name	Organization (if any)
Loretta Olsen	Lummi Social Services and Outreach
Mary Jo Durborow	Arc of Whatcom County
Jessica Mata	Sea Mar CHC
Claudia Martinez	Sea Mar CHC
Australia Cosby	Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
Molly Benedetto	Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
Stacy Miller	Northwest Regional Council
Rebeka Carr	AmeriCorps/Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
<i>Lara Welker (WAHA Convener)</i>	

Welcome and Introductions

Australia welcomed the group and members introduced themselves. Each person shared one of their assets (things they **know** about, or **can do** well, or **care** deeply about). Australia thanked Loretta for hosting the Network meeting today, and Mary Jo reminded us that we are on the traditional land of the Lummi people.

“Spotlight” – Lummi Outreach

Loretta described her role at Lummi:

- She has been at Lummi for about 5 years (returned to Lummi after living other places for many years).
- She mentioned Lummi Nation has 5,500 enrolled tribal members, and about 550 are Elders.
- Works at Little Bear Creek, housing for Elders age 55 and older with 29 apartments. Meals are provided and many activities and programs happen there. Right now they are making drums to give away for Canoe Journey (Lummi will be hosting in 2019).
- Lummi has 4-5 Community Health Representatives; they used to do home visits, but now mainly provide transportation.
- A public health nurse, social worker, and doctor do home visits.
- Loretta thinks it would be great if there were outreach programs and staff as a part of every department at Lummi.

CHW Network Purpose

Australia explained that the next part of the agenda was a discussion about the purpose of the CHW Network. She asked the group to imagine a future scenario:

It’s 2023, 5 years into the future. The Whatcom CHW Network has been incredibly active and successful in last 5 years.

Then she posed questions about this “future state” for the group to discuss.

- What would the CHW Network look like? How would it be different from now?

- What would CHWs be like (training, role, place among other professionals, pay/compensation...)?
- How would communities in Whatcom County be different because of CHW work?

Comments and Discussion - 5 years in the future....

The Whatcom CHW Network would....

- Have two times a year when ALL local CHWs are together in one room sharing experiences
- Have two-way communication between Statewide CHW Association and the Whatcom Network
- Have more promotores involved
- Create balance between data (hard numbers) and people
- Play an advocacy role at the state and federal level, together with the WA CHW Assn (more power)
- Know its purpose
- Be bigger, with more people actively participating

Whatcom Community Health Workers would....

- Know who to call for what
- Have a better understanding of resources available for clients
- Be better trained across needs and populations (for example, young and older people, different health issues)
- “Informal” CHWs would be recognized and compensated (elevating the role of trusted community members)
- Know the many different CHW roles in the “CHW bucket”
- Call out what it is [the real situation with their clients and communities]
- Be a link/bridge between leaders and real people in the community, so leaders can have both data and personal stories

Communities in Whatcom County would...

- Have real access (not just on paper)
- Have more open doors for getting care/services in Whatcom County’s systems
- Have fewer “invisible battles” in CHW work
- Know and assess their true needs
- Be heard by leaders and decision makers about what their needs are
- Have organizations, programs and services that would...
 - Have stronger relationships to work together to serve people (be on a first name basis, trust, do warm hand-offs)
 - Reach out to CHWs more [not just CHW reaching to them]
 - Have more capacity to reach out more (vs. requiring people to come in) to serve people outside of clinic or program setting.
 - Have a “move with people” CHW mindset and way of working
 - Serve more people in better ways

Lara will email these questions to all the CHWs on the list (over 50 people) to give them a chance to add their thoughts.

PARKING LOT QUESTION: What are the different kinds of CWH roles and how do they fit together?

CHW Symposium Update

Australia and Lara shared that the CHW Symposium that was being planned for November won't be happening. The sponsors of the original CHW Symposium are Chuckanut Health Foundation, North Sound Accountable Community of Health, and Peacehealth.

Lara explained there are several reasons for the decision to not hold the Symposium:

One big reason is that some new things are happening at the State level around CHWs. The State CHW Association just had its first in-person meeting last month. Also, the Dept of Health is reconvening its CHW Task Force that was created in 2014-2015. The Symposium sponsors and planning committee think that Whatcom efforts should line up with and support the state efforts (instead of just "doing our own thing" in Whatcom).

Symposium planners realized it was important to start with learning about LOCAL CHWs and their work rather than bringing in "outside experts." Also, the planning process was feeling kind of "top down" and there was recognition that this work should be led by local CHWs.

The good news is that INSTEAD of a symposium, sponsors and planning committee want to support a process (rather than an event) around advancing CHWs. That could include learning from CHWs about their work that's happening in Whatcom County and supporting the Whatcom CHW Network to grow and develop leadership. Also understanding what's happening with CHWs at the state level and figuring out ways to connect Whatcom and State efforts.

The planning committee had an idea of doing a small-scale networking event (a couple of hours), perhaps with a presentation about what's happening at the state level. Lara requested input on that idea.

Comments:

- Like the ideas of bringing the bigger CHW group together
- Focus on showing and sharing CHW work (existing models)
- It should be about the people doing the work
- Need to figure out how to get people to attend
- Involve tribes
- Would be good to have it at a location outside of Bellingham
- CHWs will need supervisors to know why the event is happening to get their support (be permitted to attend, attend on paid time).

Another kind of support would be helping local CHWs participate in state CHW activities.

Next meeting/next steps

- In Nov and Dec, the 4th Fridays fall on or right near holidays, so the group agreed to meet **Friday, November 30, 9-11 AM**. Location TBD.