

# Whatcom Community Health Workers' Network

Convened by the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement

January 25, 2019

At the Roosevelt Neighborhood Resource Center in Bellingham

## Present:

Name	Organization (if any)
Hadrian Starr	Compass Health
Katy Hetterle	Molina Health Care
Jessica Mata	Sea Mar
Claudia Martinez	Sea Mar
Rochelle Hollowell	Whatcom Family and Community Network
Monica Villareal	Coordinated Care
Jessica Alvaro-Glantz	WWU & Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement intern
Talia Sorinsin	Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
Molly Benedetto	Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
Megan Stephenson	Unity Care NW
Rebeka Carr	AmeriCorps/Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement
<i>Summer Starr – guest from Opportunity Council</i>	
<i>Lara Welker - WAHA Convener</i>	

## Welcome and Introductions

Lara welcomed the group and thanked Rochelle for generously providing the space and lots of food! Group members introduced themselves and shared something they are hoping or striving for in 2019.

## “Spotlight” – Whatcom Family and Community Network:

Rochelle described the work of the Whatcom Family and Community Network, which includes:

- Coordinating the Prevention Coalition (substance abuse prevention for youth)
- Training on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Strengthening Families program in the East County
- Events with school districts. An example is the Shuksan Middle School Family Night coming up on March 7<sup>th</sup>, where there will be health and wellness information and activities, including a rapper whose lyrics have messages around nutrition and other aspects of health.
- Spaces available for other organizations to table and share information; if interested, contact Rochelle at [connect@wfcn.org](mailto:connect@wfcn.org)

Information about trainings and events is on their website: <http://wfcn.org/>

In her VISTA position, Rochelle focuses on community capacity building. This means the projects are community-driven and get started by ASKING community members what they want to do rather than telling them what they “should” do. Capacity building also uses a positive approach, looking at the skills and resources people have – also called Asset Based Community Development.

Rochelle's role involves pulling people together to work on something they want. A couple of examples of results from this process in the Birchwood Neighborhood are a bilingual English-Spanish exercise group (which also builds social connections) and a summer day camp in the Eliza mobile home park.

### **Updates and Resource Sharing:**

Summer Starr from the Opportunity Council shared information about the next census which will be in 2020. Even though that's a year away, they are already working on ways to make sure the everyone is counted. There are concerns about the possibility of undercounting, which could result in decreased federal funding.

Things that make undercounting more likely for the 2020 Census:

- The census survey will be on-line – a barrier for people with vision impairment or no computer or internet access.
- There will be far fewer field offices around the country and fewer census workers (the people who knock on doors and fill out surveys).
- Currently there is a question about citizenship status. This may change with legal action that's going on right now, but it still deters people from completing it.
- The recommendation in WA is to encourage everyone to skip this question, regardless of their citizenship status.

Summer is putting together a Community Action Plan that will help communities be prepared and prevent undercounting as much as possible. Summer expects to share the plan with the community in May 2019.

### **State CHW Activity**

Lara described two key groups focusing on CHWs at the state level.

1) **CHW Task Force**, convened by the state Department of Health.

The Task Force is a short-term group that has CHWs and other people on it. It will be making recommendations to the legislature about education and training for CHWs in June 2019.

➔ **Marcela Suarez, Mario Banuelos, and Darcy Allen are CHWs from Whatcom on the Task Force.**

2) **CHW Association of WA**, supported by the non-profit Foundation for Healthy Generations. The Association was just started last Fall at a statewide CHW meeting in Wenatchee, and is still getting set up as an organization. There is a transitional leadership team and three committees working on this. The Association is specifically by and for CHWs, and it is ongoing.

➔ **Megan Stephenson, Laird McHattie, Mary Jo Durborow, Laura Reardon, Mario Banuelos, and Darcy Allen are CHWs from Whatcom on different committees of the CHW Association.**

## **Discussion:**

- Rochelle attended one of the community conversations with CHWs that the Dept of Health held to get CHW input for the Task Force. There were 4 community conversations in the state.
- It's important for CHWs to participate and be a part of the decisions that are happening.
- It's important for Whatcom CHWs to participate so their voice will be heard. Otherwise places with lots of people and lots of CHWs (like the Seattle area) could overpower the conversations.
- The group would like to have report-backs to the Network from the Whatcom CHWs participating on the Task Force and Association. It could be by email (good because everyone would get it), or at the meetings (good because there could be discussion). Doing both might be best!

## **CHW Network Starter Committee:**

The group discussed forming a "starter committee" that would think through and create a proposal for the Network. It would include things like structure, roles and communication.

## **Megan, Molly and Rochelle volunteered to be the committee.**

Everyone brainstormed and discussed what they would like to see in the proposal:

### **Roles**

- What are different roles for the Network? (A chair person? Co-chairs? Coordinator? Lead?)
- What are the responsibilities of the various roles?
- How is it decided who is in these roles? (Election? Anyone who volunteers?)
- Would there be term limits, and if so, what timeframe?
- Who makes decisions/how are decisions made?

### **Communication**

- Communicating within the Network
- Communicated ABOUT the Network to others
- Outreach to increase participation
  - Understand why more people aren't attending, what are the barriers?  
Explaining to CHWs' employers what the Network is and does might be helpful
- A point person who sends out information
- Monthly newsletter?

### **Purpose**

- Who we are – who, what, where, why
- What do we do?
- Why is the Network relevant/valuable?
- Identify priorities
- Guest speakers – guidelines or criteria? Who decides who comes to speak, how much time they get, etc.

The group reviewed the draft purpose statement [below] for the Network. It was agreed that this draft contains the key aspects of the Network's purpose, and there were no suggestions for additions at this time. The Starter Committee will use this as it creates its proposal.

# DRAFT – DRAFT – DRAFT

## Whatcom Community Health Workers' Network Statement of Purpose

Based on discussion at the Network meeting October 26, 2018  
Held at Lummi Nation Administration building, Kwina Rd, Lummi Nation  
See the meeting notes [here](#).

**The Whatcom CHW Network brings together a wide range of community health workers, including Promotores, Community Health Representatives, Faith Community Nurses, Peer Counselors, Resource Navigators, Family Liaisons, Community Connectors, Community Health Advocates, and others.**

**The purpose of the Whatcom CHW Network is to...**

### **1) Support CHWs**

- Build understanding of the many different CHW roles and how they fit together.
- Develop connections among CHWs so they have a wide network of people doing similar work, and know the resources available for clients
- Recognize and elevate the role of trusted community members as “informal” CHWs.
- Help CHWs get education and training that increases their knowledge and skills.

### **2) Increase real access**

- Drive organizations, programs and services to strengthen relationships and coordination, increase outreach capacity, and serve more people in better ways, including outside of clinic or program settings.
- Call out what it is – clients' and communities' the real situations.
- Empower communities to assess and speak about their true needs.

### **3) Engage in advocacy**

- Be a link/bridge between leaders and real people in the community so leaders hear personal stories in addition to data.
- Create two-way communication between Whatcom CHWs and the CHW Association of WA State.
- Advocate for legislative and other policy changes that support CHWs and their communities.

### **Next meeting/next steps**

- Next meeting: **Friday, February 22 at Unity Care Northwest**, 220 Unity St in Bellingham.
- People who'd like to host a meeting can sign up on the [Doodle poll](#) Lara sent out, or by emailing her at [lrwelker@whatcomalliance.org](mailto:lrwelker@whatcomalliance.org). A sign-up sheet will also be at meetings.
- The Network meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of every month, 9-11 AM.