



State Spotlight: Partnering with Tennessee for Community Health Worker Program Standards

September 24, 2025



Agenda

SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN TENNESSEE

OVERVIEW OF TENNCARE HEALTH STARTS

**REVIEW OF CHW PROGRAM ACCREDITATION
STANDARDS AND PROCESS**

**CURRENT STATUS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS
LEARNED**

Q&A

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today's Speakers

Introductions



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Polling Question #1



Is your state currently funding Community Health Workers?

- A. Yes, we fund community health workers in our Medicaid program.
- B. Yes, but we are not funding them with Medicaid.
- C. We are considering funding CHWs with Medicaid funding.
- D. No, but we are interested in leveraging community health workers.

Polling Question #2



Is your state using licensure or program accreditation for CHWs?

- A. Yes, we have a state licensure requirement for CHWs.
- B. Yes, we are using accreditation to assure/certify a CHW program.
- C. We are considering either licensure or accreditation for CHWs.
- D. No, but licensure or accreditation would help fund CHWs.

Polling Question #3



Please rank the challenges/barriers you are encountering in sustainably funding CHWs:

- A. Fully funding CHW scope of services (FFS does not cover them fully)
- B. Assuring quality and access to CHWs statewide
- C. Collecting data about CHW service delivery to verify utilization
- D. Recruiting, training, and supervising CHWs



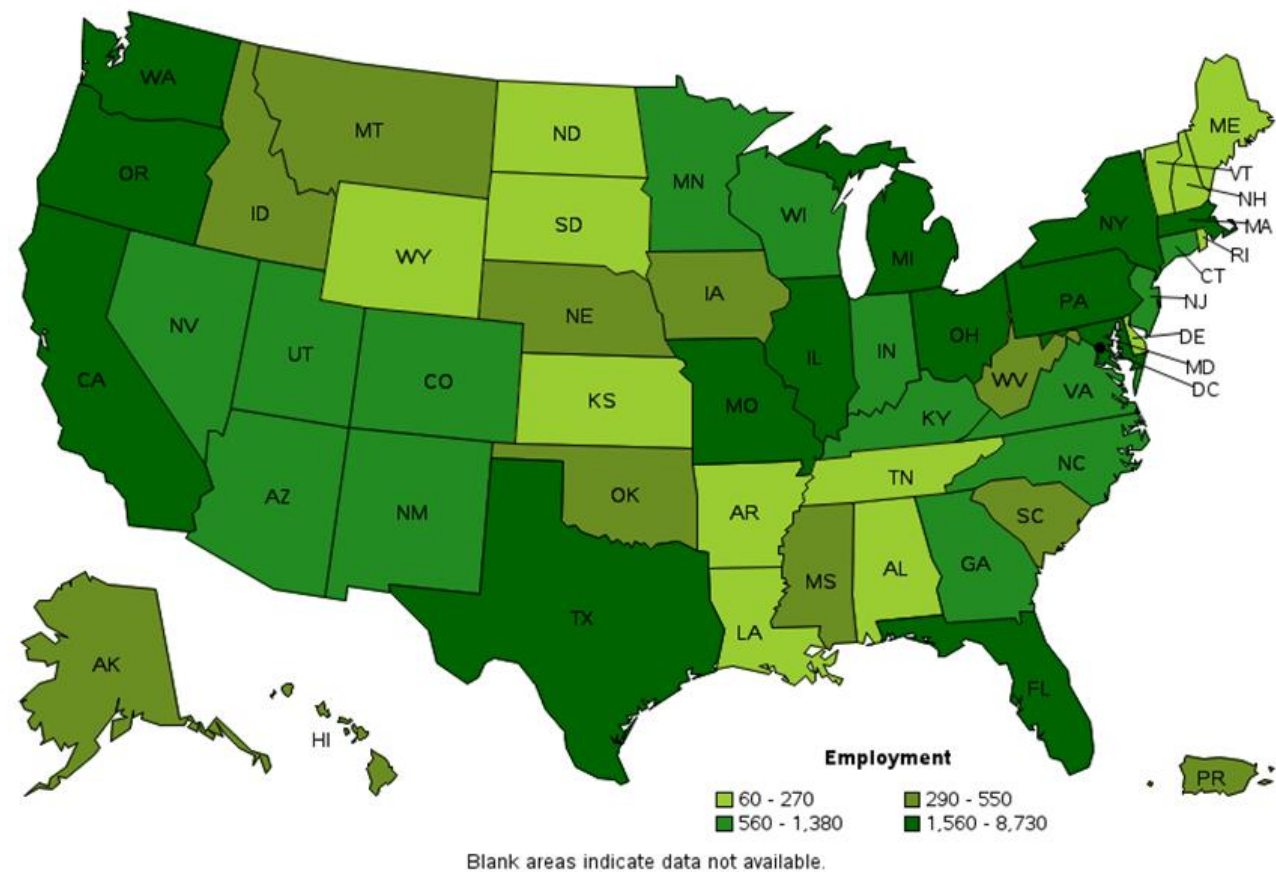
Community Health Workers in Tennessee

Community Health Worker Landscape

CHWs are frontline public health workers who are rooted in the patient community through shared life and/or health experiences.

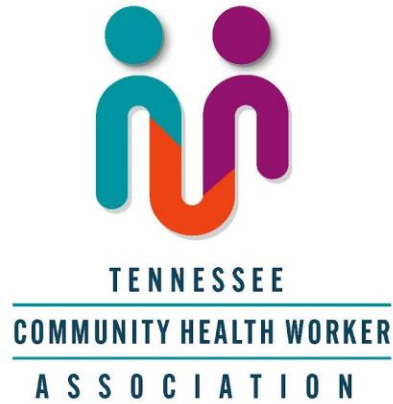
Titles include: Outreach Worker, Community Health Educator, Community Health Navigator, etc.

Employment of community health workers, by state, May 2023



Tennessee Community Health Worker Association

Overview



- History, Mission and Vision
- Programs
 - Membership
 - Individual Certification
 - CHW Program Accreditation

TNCHWA Program Accreditation

Overview and Benefits

TennCare Partnership

Program Standards Development



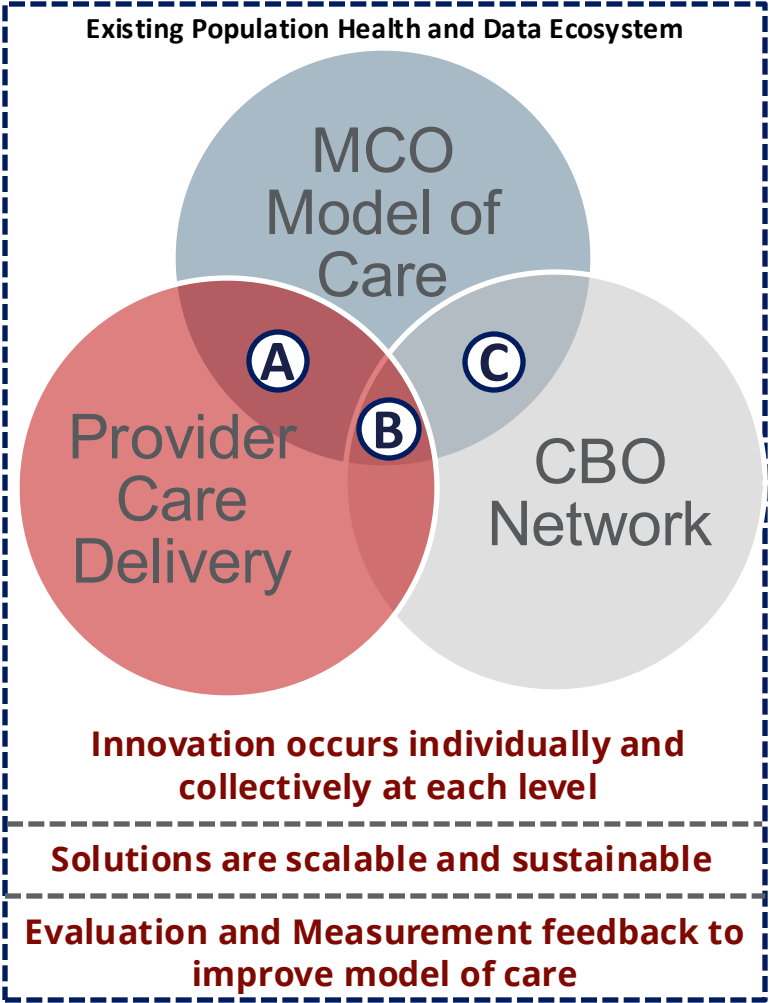


Overview of TennCare Health Starts

TennCare's Health Starts Vision and Strategy



All TennCare members are screened for SDOH with a unified screening tool, identified needs are met by community resources, resulting in improved health of each TennCare member.



- A

Provider Partnerships

Partnering with health care providers to screen and identify health related social needs for TennCare members and connect members to community-based services
- B

Technology Supports

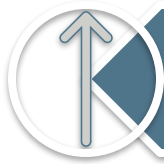
Implement and scale technology tools to providers and community organizations that can help support screening and referrals as well as tracking referral completion and outcome data.
- C

Workforce Development

Invest in development of evidence-based models of care incorporating non-traditional healthcare providers, such as Community Health Workers, to better address TennCare members' health related social needs.

TennCare's Community Health Worker Vision

In 2022, TennCare conducted interviews and research to determine best practices for integrating CHWs into provider organization care models. These findings informed TennCare's Vision and Strategy for CHWs.



Increase access to community health workers implementing **evidence-based practices** to address social risk factors and improve members health outcomes



Establish program standards for CHW organizations that reflect evidence-based practices and **align expectations** between CHW organizations, TennCare, and TennCare MCOs



Invest in CHW infrastructure to increase **continuity, capacity, and sustainability** of the CHW workforce to serve TennCare members



Integrate and **strategically align** TennCare CHW efforts, where appropriate, into broader statewide CHW efforts



Develop a **pathway** for financial reimbursement in partnership with TennCare's MCOs

TennCare CHW Infrastructure Grant

Purpose: Support provider organizations in establishing infrastructure to integrate high-quality CHW programs and glean salient findings to inform future strategic decisions.

Structure: Through a competitive grant selection process, TennCare awarded 15 organizations with funding to implement infrastructure to stand up high-quality CHW programs.

Initial grant awards ranged from \$200,000 to \$750,000 per year per organization. Amounts were based on the size and scope of the organizations' CHW program(s). Initial grant terms are one year with one year renewal option

In Practice: Grantees receive milestone-based payments for the submission of deliverables. Deliverables align with TNCHWA Program Standards.

All grantees are expected to partake in the Program Accreditation process at no cost.

Grantee Spotlights

Interfaith Dental

- 8 Community Dental Health Workers
- Screening via Hotline and in person care teams
- Tiered support for clients based on SDOH needs

Mental Health Cooperative

- 6 CHWs
- Intertwined with TennCare Behavioral Health VBP program and adult care teams
- High ED or IP Utilization focus



Review of TNCWHA Program Accreditation Process

TNCHWA CHW Program Accreditation

Standards Overview



Recruitment and Hiring



CHW Scope of Work



Supports for CHWs



CHW Training



CHW Performance Evaluations



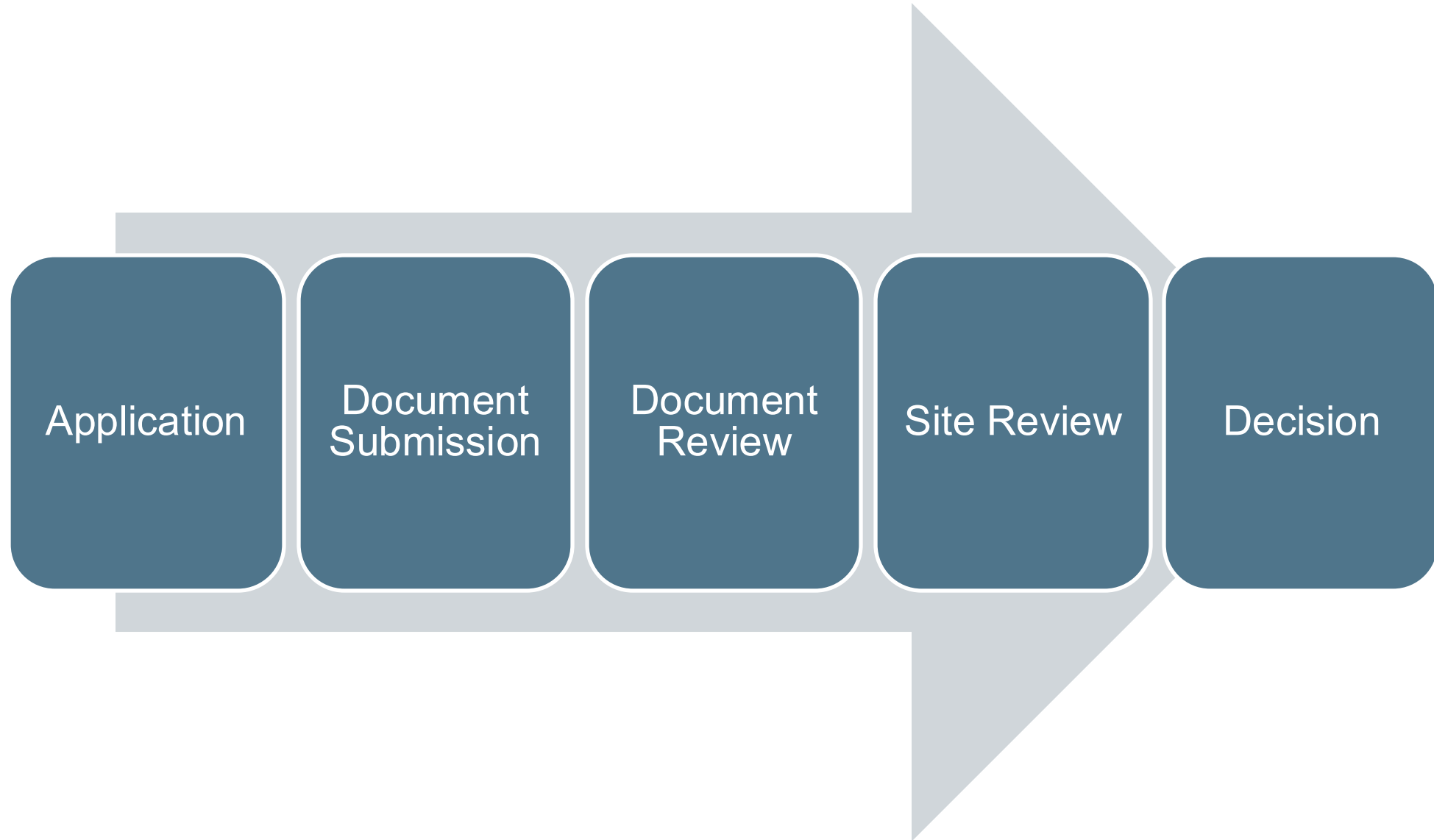
CHW Professional & Workforce Development



CHW Supervision

TNCHWA CHW Program Accreditation

Review Process



NCQA's Role

Support and Services

Developed and maintain Evidence Guidelines and scoring methodology.

Conduct training for reviewers and host Office Hour sessions.

Manage end-to-end review process.

Conduct initial document check.

Conduct quality oversight review.

Implement process improvements.



Current Status, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Current Status and Looking Ahead

2025-2026

To date, TNCHWA has accredited **9 CHW programs** in 7 organizations throughout Tennessee.

November 2025 will start the next cohort of reviews:

- **14 programs** in 8 organizations.

Challenges

Establishing a
pathway for
financial
sustainability

Competing
priorities and
limited capacity at
the provider level

Ensuring the role
of CHWs is clear

Lessons Learned

Maintain
flexibility

Be open to
feedback and
adjust as
needed

Ensure voices
of CHWs are
included

Polling Question #4



Are you interested in learning more about the Community Health Worker Program Accreditation with a member of NCQA and TNCHWA?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. Maybe.



Questions

you're invited!

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QUALITY**



NCQA Upcoming Webinars- Register Now!

October 1, 3:00-4:00pm ET
NCQA Supports Medicaid: Tools to
Streamline State Compliance and
Reporting

Join NCQA as we discuss how states can leverage the Medicaid Managed Care Toolkit for burden reduction in compliance and quality reporting.

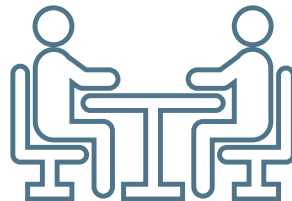
[*Register here!*](#)

October 30, 4:00-5:00pm ET
State Webinar: Advancing Care
Delivery Programs

NCQA will provide programmatic updates to Advancing Primary Care, Certified Community Behavioral Health Standards and updates to PCMH and Behavioral Health Integration program.

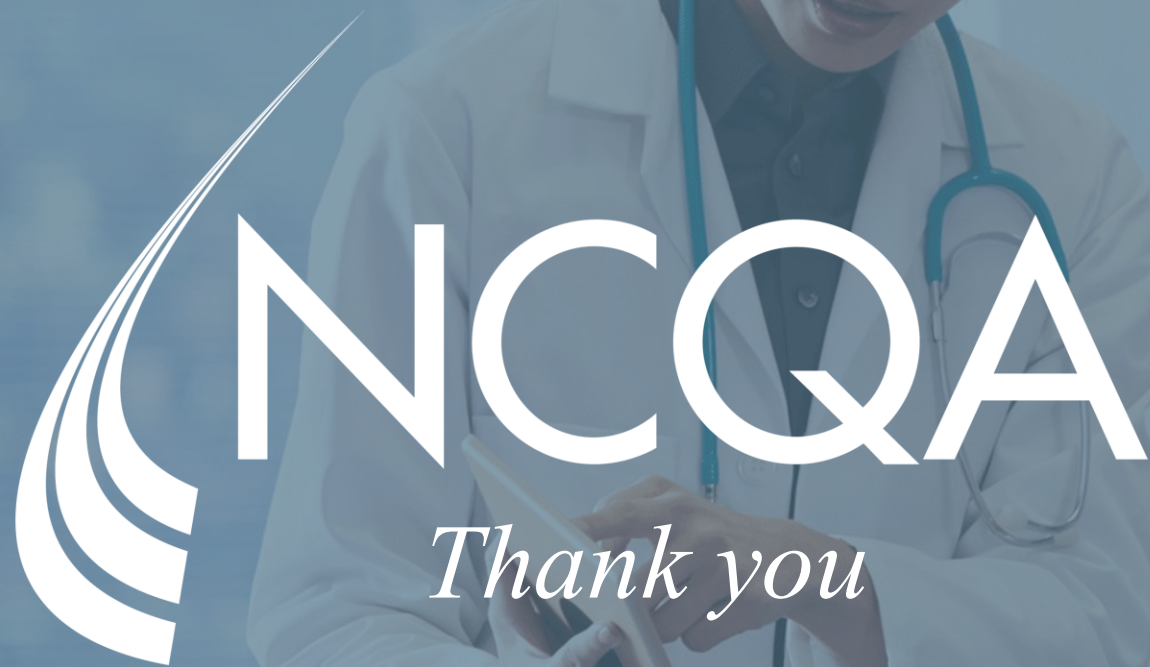
[*Register here!*](#)

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to connect at publicpolicy@ncqa.org*

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Thank you