Key steps to starting a CHW program

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| Elements of successful CHW programs |
| 1. Leadership buy-in
 | * Leadership buy-in is essential in supporting any program that carries additional costs to the organization. A CHW program requires an upfront investment and has the potential to help health systems recoup costs in the long run by reducing preventable ED visits and/or readmissions by connection patients to preventive care.
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| 1. Identify patient population
 | * Identify the target patient population and define the need to deploy CHWs.
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| 1. Recruitment
 | * Identify the target population, based on disease prevalence, barriers to care, patient outcomes, etc.
* Develop steps required to recruit a CHW to serve that target population .
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| 1. Defining the CHW role
 | * Clearly define the role of the CHW from the perspective of the CHW, health system and community.
* Develop a job description for CHW.
* Set program goals, which should include identifying the target population, developing a timeline for milestones, and improvement metrics.
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| 1. Collaboration
 | * Define how the CHW can collaborate with the patient’s care team.
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| 1. Training and education
 | * Develop onboarding and training materials, including any requirements specific to the CHW position.
* Include training for health system staff on the role of the CHW and the referral process.
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| 1. Job essentials
 | * Determine what equipment and supplies a CHW might need to deliver expected services, both in the office and out in the community.
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| 1. Supervision
 | * Establish regular check-ins with CHWs to provide guidance, feedback, case reviews and skill development.
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| 1. Community involvement
 | * Define the role of the CHW in the community.
* Identify the ways the CHW can be supportive of the population they serve.
* Find opportunities for the CHW to attend community events for outreach activities.
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| 1. Referral Process
 | * Develop referral criteria, list the markers for a patient to be eligible for CHW support and define the process to document and track referrals.
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| 1. Documentation and information management
 | * Determine how the CHW will document progress notes, home visits and services provided.
* Set documentation requirements (i.e. notes should be entered within 3 days of service/communication occurring).
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| 1. Quality checks
 | * Identify the person who will be responsible for chart reviews for quality purposes.
* Determine how to use data from chart reviews to enhance patient care.
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| 1. Program performance evaluation
 | * Evaluate program performance against goals and performance indicators regularly
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| 1. Program budget
 | * Develop the program budget, which should include personnel costs, equipment/supplies, training and data tracking/management.
* Identify internal and/or external funding sources
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