Key steps to starting a CHW program

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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. |
| 1. Identify patient population | * Identify the target patient population and define the need to deploy CHWs. |
| 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 . |
| 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. |
| 1. Collaboration | * Define how the CHW can collaborate with the patient’s care team. |
| 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. |
| 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. |
| 1. Supervision | * Establish regular check-ins with CHWs to provide guidance, feedback, case reviews and skill development. |
| 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. |
| 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. |
| 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). |
| 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. |
| 1. Program performance evaluation | * Evaluate program performance against goals and performance indicators regularly |
| 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 |