

The title “*Community Health Worker*” (CHW) is a broad term encompassing many different career choices and responsibilities in departments such as social services, education, and health care. The uniting factor among different types of CHWs is the importance of their strong relationship to the community they serve. In general, CHWs bridge the gap between the health care system and the community by aiding in culturally appropriate care, providing counseling and social support, building relationships, and connecting clients to services they may need. Three examples of Community Health Workers include *Interpreter Cultural Mediators*, *Patient Navigators*, and *Accompagnateurs*.

#### *Interpreter Cultural Mediator*

- Bilingual, bicultural people who are familiar with both the medical system and American cultures who serve as a contact for LEP or non-English speaking families from their own ethnic communities
- Help families navigate an unfamiliar health care system and convey their needs and beliefs regarding cultural practices to providers
- Responsible for interpreting to the provider any nuances of the patient’s cultural and social circumstances that could impact care in the patient-interpreter-provider interaction
- Act as interpreters, provide training for families who need help obtaining medication and/or transportation, offer health education for the community, and train health care providers in cultural competence
- For a complete guide in selecting, training, and supporting Interpreter Cultural Mediators, click here: <http://ethnomed.org/ethnomed/chc/icm/icm.pdf>.

#### *Patient Navigators*

- Work with patients and their families through illness or aging to provide information and research, advocacy, problem solving, and integrative care
- The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is currently employing several patient navigator programs to reduce health disparities in cancer diagnosis and treatment. More information can be found at <http://crchd.cancer.gov>
- Patient Navigators, LLC offers services to patients and families who have an illness or are simply aging and feel ill-equipped to handle the insurance claims, diagnosis options, and other health care needs. Learn more at <http://patientnavigator.com/>.

#### *Accompagnateurs*

- Bridge the gap between the medical profession and the general public by developing relationships with patients
- Perform home visits to administer medicine, attend medical appointments and counseling sessions, provide education, and offer social support
- Currently working with patients who have experienced difficulty adhering to traditional HIV/AIDS therapy regimens at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, MA. For more information on training Accompagnateurs and to view their handbook follow this link: [http://model.pih.org/accompagnateurs\\_curriculum](http://model.pih.org/accompagnateurs_curriculum).

## References

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