

Employing Community Health Workers in Primary Care *Benefits to Practices Serving Children and Youth*

Primary care practices benefit from using Community Health Workers to support pediatric patients and their families. Community Health Workers can help families access and manage an array of care and services. This helps practices:

- ✓ mitigate impacts of **social determinants of health** on care plan implementation.
- ✓ provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to **advance health equity**.
- ✓ **free clinician time** to focus on clinical care.
- ✓ **meet [CCO incentive metrics](#)** by encouraging families to get preventative care for children (e.g. well-child visits, immunizations, mental health screening, and health aspects of kindergarten readiness).
- ✓ **reduce no-shows** by addressing access issues like transportation and childcare.

Training and paying Community Health Workers in primary care practices

Community Health Workers are [certified by the Oregon Health Authority](#). Their efforts may be reimbursed by Oregon Medicaid. Billable codes for their services are available [here](#), along with more information on certification and billing. Individual Oregon Coordinated Care Organizations may have different payment models for Community Health Worker services.

Oregon State University offers [Community Health Worker training](#), including a certification course.



*Children with special health care needs are especially well-served by Community Health workers, who help families navigate the additional care and services they require. The skills and knowledge Community Health Workers use with this population apply to serving **all** children and families.*

The Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs developed an online course for Community Health Workers:

Supporting Families: Navigating Care and Services for Children with Special Health Needs

The course provides an overview of key systems serving children, tenets of family-centered care, and practical strategies to support care coordinators. Information and registration [here](#).

“ Numerous studies over more than a decade show that Community Health Workers help improve patients’ outcomes and reduce costs as payment models shift to reward practices that deliver these results. ”

[\(American Medical Association, 2020\)](#)

The Unique Role of the Community Health Worker

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| Work outside of the clinic. | Meeting families in their homes or communities offers insights and connections that can open new pathways to supporting child health. |
| Share cultural and linguistic ties with patients’ families. | Cultural commonalities foster understanding. |
| Address barriers to accessing health care. | Families with adequate transportation and childcare are more likely to make and keep medical appointments. |
| Build family capacity to manage child health conditions. | Families get health information in their primary languages. They also gain skills and confidence for communicating their needs effectively. |
| Ease transitions between providers or care settings. | Families and providers benefit from preparation for changes in a child’s care and services. |
| Facilitate communication and coordination. | Families get help navigating care and services (e.g. developmental disability programs, special education, allied therapies, etc.). |
| Build on family strengths. | A strengths-based approach to problem-solving fosters resilience. |
| Improve local systems of care for children. | Community Health Workers advance health equity by advocating for specific populations at practice and community levels. |