



Chang Building, 222 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA 01545 (508) 856-4852
434 Jamaicaaway, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 (617) 524-6696 Ext. 102

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MACHW:

MACHW is the statewide professional organization for community health workers (CHWs) from all disciplines. We formed in March 2000 to lead the movement to organize, define, and strengthen the profession of community health work.

MACHW's Definition of a CHW:

A community health worker is a public health professional who promotes full and equal access to necessary health and social services by applying his or her unique understanding of the experiences, language, and culture of the communities he or she serves.

Editor-in-Chief
Lisa Renee Siciliano

Letter from the Chair

Dear MACHW Members,

I hope that as you read this newsletter you are having a wonderful and safe summer. Though I hope you are able to take some time off to relax this season with your close ones, I know that despite the fact that it is summer, you are all hard at work in the communities you serve.

This has been yet another busy first half of the year for MACHW. One great initiative which I'd like to highlight involved our staff and board members who participated in our organization's first ever MACHW Lobby Day on May 9, 2007. Our Lobby Day began with a comprehensive training by board member Antonia Blinn about the many nuances of advocacy and lobbying, and worked with the group on honing our message for legislators and their staff. The goal we established was to meet with legislators and their staff to let them know about MACHW's work, and encourage them to get involved with enhancing the field of community health workers.

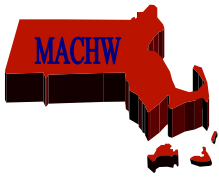
MACHW organized its Lobby Day with both group visits and individual visits. The group visits were structured with those board and staff members who were experienced with the lobbying processes, in conjunction with those members who were lobbying for their first time. Visits were scheduled with legislators representing the districts we resided in, as well as those legislators who hold positions of leadership in the State House. MACHW was able to make visits to the offices of Representatives Alicea, Bradley, Brownsberger, Coakley-Rivera, DiNatale, Guyer, Poirier, Rogeness, Rush, Spelane, Swan, St. Fleur and Walrath. Additionally, we visited the offices of Senators Antonioni, Creem, Moore, Timilty, and Wilkerson.

We capped off our Lobby Day with a visit to Representative Gloria Fox, a champion of community health workers and numerous issues raised in the legislature to promote and foster the professionals in this field. We engaged in a fruitful discussion with Representative Fox about her experience as a state legislator, and ways in which MACHW can collaborate with her office.

Overall, staff and board members reported a fun and engaging experience with Lobby Day, whether it was their first or hundredth time doing such work. We felt really positive with having had the opportunity to practice different ways in which we capture the work of MACHW, especially when speaking with policymakers. We also felt that we strengthened and developed relationships with influential individuals in state government. We look forward to next year's Lobby Day!

Sincerely,

JENNIFER CHOW



Massachusetts Highlighted in National Study

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professions has just released the Community Health Worker National Workforce Study. The report describes a national study of CHWs including the development, size, characteristics (including wages) and types of employers. Four states including Massachusetts are highlighted in depth in the report. MACHW's Executive Director served as a co-chair to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and past MACHW chair, Durrell Fox was also a TAG member. The Central Massachusetts Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Inc. also assisted with coordinating CHW interviews in Massachusetts. While there are a few inaccuracies regarding MACHW's history, this is a must have document. The study was implemented through a 2-year contract awarded to the University of Texas, Health Science Center at San Antonio.

To see the full report visit <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/chw/>

A CHW'S VIEW OF THE NEWLY FORMED AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHWs (AACHW)

By Durrell Fox, Steering Committee Co-Chair

For many years CHWs, our allies and partners (probably many of you) have been on the journey to create and develop a diverse national association for and by CHWs. Many of us have envisioned a national association that would lead the charge for CHW workforce development, policy, financing, research, training and education. The journey on the road to fulfilling this vision has been full of challenges and set backs but has also been marked by progress and success.

I pay homage and give thanks to the over 200 CHWs, allies, and partners who attended approximately 8 meetings and participated in 4 conference calls over the last 6 years to give input into the model that has become the American Association of CHWs. Your input has informed where we are today with the association; none of those meetings or calls were in vain!

***"THERE IS NO PROGRESS
WITHOUT STRUGGLE!"
- FREDERICK DOUGLASS***

Within the last six months we have achieved many milestones that build on the work of many of you over the recent years and we also acknowledge that we are standing on the shoulders and achievements of those who have been CHWs or supporters of CHWs over the years, decades and indeed centuries of struggle.

I thank members of all committees for doing some real work in between CHW meetings and conferences to make the association happen. I also thank the Harrison Law Institute staff and students for supporting our infrastructure development efforts.

To create a successful CHW national association takes a lot of work and a lot of support to get us beyond the places where have been before!

Contact info for AACHW:

Durrell Fox at durrell.fox@umassmed.edu or Pam Chapman at pam.chapman@spectrum-health.org



The Public Health Council

By Jose Rafael Rivera

The hard work of Lisa Renee Siciliano and Durrell Fox continues to move MACHW forward towards promoting “the integration of community health workers into the health care, public health and human services workforce.” The work began with what Durrell modestly calls conversations with Representative Gloria Fox “as another legislative strategy to advance MACHW and CHW policy in MA.” It continued with tenacious advocacy on the part of Durrell and Lisa Renee and resulted in MACHW having a seat on the Public Health Council (PHC).

The PHC has had an important role in public health since it was established by legislation in the nineteenth century. A Press Release issued by DPH earlier this month reads: “The Public Health Council has the authority to make and issue rules and regulations related to health care, health care facilities, patient protection and other areas of public health policy. The Council also plays an important role in ensuring the equitable distribution of health care resources throughout the Commonwealth by reviewing and approving plans by hospitals to expand or add additional services.”

Earlier this year, the PHC was reconstituted as part of Health Care Reform. The thoughtful broadening of the Council membership, in the words of Health and Human Services Secretary JudyAnn Bigby, was designed to “bring a depth and breadth of experience in public health and health care that will stand the State and the Department in good stead”. The PHC is made up of a Chairperson (the DPH Commissioner) and fourteen members who serve for a term of six years. Twelve are appointed by the Governor (four must be providers and four must be non-providers); the other two members, who must be non-providers, are appointed respectively by the Secretary of Elder Affairs and the Secretary of Veterans’ Services. On April 25th, the members of the PHC were sworn in by Governor Patrick’s office. The vision of Governor Patrick, the leadership of Commissioner Auerbach and the expertise of the diverse PHC herald significant and progressive work ahead.

Continued on page 4...

Dr. E. Lee Rosenthal & DPH Commissioner John Auerbach to speak at MACHW’s Annual Meeting

MACHW will host its first Annual Meeting on September 28th, all MACHW members, CHWs and supporters are invited to attend. The meeting will be held at the Hoagland Pincus Conference Center in Shrewsbury from 11:00-3:00. Dr. E. Lee Rosenthal of the National Health Advisor Study and the Community Health Worker National Education Collaborative (CHW NEC) has agreed to deliver the keynote address. Commissioner John Auerbach of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will also address the crowd.

For additional information please contact Lisa Renee Siciliano at lrsiciliano@mphaweb.org or call 617.524.6696 Ext. 102 or 508.856.4852.



MACHW Hires Policy Coordinator



MACHW welcomes Cindy Marti as our newest staff member! Cindy began as our Policy Coordinator on June 11th. She has recently received her MPH from Tufts University and was working as a CHW at the Lynn Community Health Center before joining MACHW. We are excited to have Cindy join our staff. To become involved with policy initiatives please contact Cindy at cmarti@mphaweb.org or 617.524.6696 ext 108.

The Public Health Council *cont. from page 3*

The opportunity for MACHW to be a part of this work is no less than monumental. But it is also a natural partnership. The PHC will ensure that public health policy to be informed by the best science and health information available. Our brochure defines a community health worker as “a public health professional who promotes full and equal access to necessary health and social services by applying his or her unique understanding of the experiences, language and culture of the communities he or she serves.” MACHW’s membership in the PHC brings together the science of best practices and the understanding of what our communities offer, need and respond to.

I am humbled and honored by the opportunity and challenge to be that liaison. I am also excited to bring to the PHC my experiences at LUK, where my passion for the fields of substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, prevention, cultural diversity, and community engagement among others has been challenged, honed and nurtured for the past 26+ years.

Acknowledging “the broad spectrum of public health and health care expertise represented by the new Public Health Council members, Commissioner Auerbach has stated his confidence: “they will serve the public interest well and will work with the Department of Public Health on its many responsibilities to protect and promote the health of all the residents of Massachusetts.” With your assistance, I look forward to adding the voices of MACHW, LUK and my communities to my own, to answer this call to action.

MACHW Joins with Affiliate CHW Organizations

The COWNT Coalition in Springfield has recently signed on as a MACHW affiliate organization! While both organizations have been working together over the past couple of years, we are about to formalize the relationship. COWNT will remain the COWNT Coalition and function as it currently functions. MACHW is looking forward to gaining 2 additional members of the Board of Directors (representatives of COWNT). May this be a long and fruitful relationship!

COWNT is the second CHW group to join MACHW as an affiliate. The H.O.P.E. Coalition, Hyannis was the first. Project H.O.P.E. representatives Camila Monteiro and Iris Reyes serve on MACHW’s Board of Directors. More information about both organizations can be found in the Affiliate Action section of this newsletter on page 5.



MACHW Board of Directors

Jennifer Chow, Chair

Health Care for All
Boston
chow@hcfama.org

Antonia Blinn, Finance Officer

MA Coalition of School Based Health Centers
Boston
ablinn@mcsbhc.org

Camila Monteiro

Chair, Events Committee
Community Action Committee of
Cape Cod & The Islands
Hyannis
camillam@cacci.cc

José Rafael Rivera

Central MA Center for Healthy Communities,
Worcester
jrivera@cmchc.org

Vicki Deschamps

Chair, Membership Committee
Pittsfield
vldeschamps@hotmail.com

Iris Reyes

Community Action Committee of
Cape Cod & The Islands
Hyannis
irisr@cacci.cc

Gail Ballester

MA Department of Public Health
Boston
Gail.ballester@state.ma.us

Maritza Smidy

Providence Prenatal Clinic
Holyoke
Maritza.Smidy@sphs.com

MACHW Staff

Lisa Renee Siciliano

Executive Director
lrsiciliano@aol.com
or lrsiciliano@mphaweb.org

Cindy Marti

Policy Coordinator
cmarti@mphaweb.org

MACHW Office Locations

c/o UMASS Office Of Community Programs
Chang Building
222 Maple Avenue,
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Phone: (508) 856-4852

c/o Massachusetts Public Health Association
434 Jamaicaaway
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Phone: (617) 524-6696 Ext. 102
Fax: (617) 524-5225



COWNT Coalition (Community Outreach Worker Network and Training)

By Brenda Evans, MPH

Hello! On behalf of the COWNT Coalition I would like to introduce ourselves.

The Community Outreach Workers Network and Training (COWNT) Coalition evolved from two independent efforts (HCAP & Covering Kids and Families and the Community Forum & Legislative breakfast) involved many of the same community health workers and through their initiative, COWNT was organized as a collaboration of Pioneer Valley AHEC and the Massachusetts Public Health Association. As the funding for these initiatives was ending, it became clear that the network of community outreach workers that met to address common issues wanted to continue to meet and expand its interest base.



The membership of COWNT includes community health workers and/or advocates who work and/or live in Springfield and Holyoke and are a vital component of the health care system and public health process. We are a volunteer membership coalition with over 80 community outreach workers on our mailing list.

Recently, the coalition became an affiliate of Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW) and presented a poster session on the Coalition at the Unity 2007 Conference in Tampa, FL.

COWNT Coalition bi-monthly meeting: August 20th from 12 noon-2:00 pm @ Meline Kasparian Professional Building, Springfield, MA. All are welcome! For more information please contact, Brenda Evans at (413) 787-6756 or e-mail bevans@springfieldcityhall.com.

Project HOPE Cape Cod & The Islands

By Cathy Weidhaas, Project HOPE



The HOPE Project, a program of Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands, offers eligibility screenings for Public Health Insurance Programs and seeks to ensure that all Cape Cod and Islands residents, currently uninsured or underinsured, are assisted with enrollment, linked to a Primary Care Provider, and educated on how to navigate the system. The goals of the HOPE Project are to improve access to health care among Cape Cod's low and middle-income residents, add multi-lingual Outreach Educators, partnership with the Cape Cod Diabetes Disparities Collaborative, maintain partnerships with public and private entities that provide 'culturally competent' services,

maintain partnerships with interpreter services on Cape Cod, advocate for immigrants for better health care access, and obtain continual funding to sustain the project. The HOPE Project has been a MACHW affiliate since 2005. For more information on the HOPE Project contact Camila Monteiro at (508) 775-6583 or e-mail camillam@cacci.cc