

Happy Holidays!!!

Wishing you a happy & healthy holiday season!
- The MACHW Board & Staff

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About MACHW...

MACHW is a statewide network of 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.

Our Vision

Community Health Workers are empowered to and supported to build and promote health in our communities.

Editor-in-Chief
Durrell Fox

Editor
Allison Bauer

Advocating for Access Training

MACHW conducted a two-day "Advocating for Access" training program on November 6 and December 1 in Central Massachusetts. This program is a collaboration of the Massachusetts Community Health Worker Network (MACHW), the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA), and the Community Health Education Center (CHEC). This training was funded in part by March of Dimes, MA Chapter and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. Participants included 35 individuals

representing over 20 organizations from all across the state and representing Central, Northeast, Cape Cod, Western and Southeast Massachusetts. The goals of the training were two-fold --- both providing substantive information about strategies for maternal and child health outreach and advocacy, in addition to a general session focused on presentation skills. Stephanie Legatos was the trainer for presentation skills, Durrell Fox and Lisa Renee Siciliano presented the advocacy piece, and Julie Wisniewski and

Sharon Henderson did the Maternal Child Health segment. On the second day of the training, participants were asked to prepare and give their own presentations as a means of using the skills they learned in the first part of the training.

The goal of the Advocating for Access program is to empower community health workers across the state to take an active role in securing access to health care for the clients and families they serve.

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Advocacy Toolkit: A How To Guide for CHWs

The board and staff of MACHW are currently working on creating an advocacy toolkit for Community Health Workers (CHWs). The goal of the toolkit will be to provide some basic guidance on how CHWs can organize themselves, connect with other groups and individuals, and utilize their power in both a

policy and legislative setting.

The toolkit will include the following sections:

1- *Background Information on Legislative and Policy Process*

2- *Basic Issues Section: Health Care and Budget*

3- *How To Section: Includes information on*

how to set up a meeting with an elected official; how to write a letter to the editor, joining coalitions.

4 – *List of Important organizations and websites*

**Look for the
Advocacy Toolkit –
Coming in 2004!!!**

MACHW Board of Directors

Elections for new MACHW Board members in March 2004! If you are interested in becoming a Board member, please contact Durrell Fox at (617) 355-8421 or dfoxnehec@aol.com

Gail Ballester
MDPH CHW Project

Antonia Blinn
*March of Dimes,
Massachusetts Chapter*

Rhonda Bundy
*Healthy Directions
Fitchburg*

Greatel Cunningham
*Springfield Partners for
Community Action*

Vicki Deschamps
Berkshire North WIC

Durrell Fox, Chair
*New England HIV
Education Consortium
(NEHEC)*

Tatyana Gorodetsky
*Outreach Worker Training
Institute/Central MA
AHEC*

Denise Lau
Health Care For All

Pam McBurnie
Boston

Lisa Renee Siciliano
*Massachusetts Public
Health Association*

Maritza Smidy
*Mercy Women's Health
Center*

Spotlight on MACHW Network at OWTI Opening Day

Tatyana Gorodetsky

The Outreach Worker Training Institute (OWTI) of Central Massachusetts Area Health Education Center (CM AHEC) commenced its Community Health Worker Certificate Program 2003/2004 with an Opening Day Ceremony on November 4, 2003 at the Hoagland-Pincus Conference Center in Shrewsbury, MA. The twenty-two participants in this year's class from Central and Western MA were welcomed by Tatyana Gorodetsky, OWTI Director and MACHW Board Member, along with several community representatives. Among those in attendance were Durrell Fox, New England HIV Education Consortium Project Coordinator and MACHW

Board Chair, and Lisa Renee Siciliano, Central MA Community Organizer MPHA, MACHW Board Member and OWTI faculty member. They spoke on the power of community health workers while inviting OWTI participants to become more involved on a statewide and national level by joining the MACHW Network. Other guest speakers included Joanne Calista, Executive Director CM AHEC, Saúl Torres of the Statewide AHEC Program, Michael S. Wronski of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation (the OWTI funding partner), and Cathy O'Connor of the MA Department of Public Health. After the official greetings, participants began their core competencies of the 45-

hour curriculum with Service Coordination Skills. This year's Certificate Program offers participants college credits upon completion. The course will continue through the Certificate Award Graduation on March 23, 2004.

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The Outreach Worker Training Institute's (OWTI) mission is to provide community health workers and supervisors with a comprehensive opportunity for skill building, resource identification, professional development, and networking.

For more information on the OWTI, contact Tatyana Gorodetsky at 508-756-6676 or tatyana@cmahec.org.

Making Our Voices Heard!

Lisa Renee Siciliano

Community health workers and our programs continue to be placed on the chopping block; we are often seen as disposable. Our co-workers and peers have lost jobs. We've seen an increased need for health and human services in communities, but programs that are still available cannot accommodate the need. CHWs must enhance our advocacy skills to not only remain employed but to assure services for the populations we serve.

CHWs have tremendous advocacy skills that we utilize on a daily basis to ensure services for families and individuals. We must learn to enhance and broaden these skills to advocate for ourselves with legislators, administrators and policy makers. MACHW has been offering advocacy trainings for CHWs at

various locations across MA and the nation. Take advantage of this opportunity and others that may come your way to sharpen your advocacy skills.

There are other ways to become stronger advocates for public health, and in particular CHWs. Become active members in MACHW's Policy Committee. Contact the committee co-chairs Durrell Fox or Lisa Renee Siciliano (contact information listed below) for additional information.

Join advocacy organizations like the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) and Health Care For All (HCFA). Both of these organizations support advocacy work including that of CHWs and have representation on the MACHW Board of

Directors. MPHA is actively recruiting CHWs as members. Join coalitions. MACHW is an organizational member of MPHA and active in many coalitions that include the MassHealth Defense Group spearheaded by HCFA. Our participation will only increase our collective voice if individuals are members as well.

Over the next few months there are many opportunities to become an advocate for public health. You can provide testimony at upcoming health care hearings at the State House, contact your legislator, and educate your community about advocacy. You can obtain a listing of upcoming hearings by visiting the MPHA website at www.mphaweb.org.

The '05 governor's budget will be released soon. This is a great opportunity for CHWs to band together to protect public health before the budget goes to the House. Call or write your local legislator with your concerns. They need to hear from you, their constituent. These are just a few ideas. The most effective way to increase CHW advocacy power is to be active and involved!

Contact MACHW by email at MACHW_2001@yahoo.com



JOIN US! Contact these groups

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"The most effective way to increase CHW advocacy power is to be active and involved!"



MEDICARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The new drug benefit will begin in 2006 with estimated premiums to cost \$35 a month. There may be different drug coverage with the different plans, which you must sign-up with in order to get coverage. Premiums can vary with the plans. The annual deductible can

change as Medicare costs change, which also applies to the premiums. So far, legislation does not prevent drug costs from skyrocketing. The new legislation does not allow you to buy cheaper drugs from Canada or other countries.

Information excerpted from "Understanding the New Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit" by Families USA, http://www.familiesusa.org/site/DocServer/11-25_Q_A.doc?docID=2321

Do you know who is your state legislator? You can find out by going online to <http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php> or calling 1-800-462-VOTE (8683).

CHANGES IN MASSHEALTH – RECENT AND PROPOSED

This information is from the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute & Health Care For All.

RECENT CUTS:

October 2003: MassHealth Essential creates coverage for up to 36,000 long-term unemployed adults under age 65.

November 2003: Premium charges applied to 17,000 households under age 65 with income between 100-150% of poverty.

November 2003: CMSP charges premiums to families with income between 150-200% of poverty and quadruples premium for families with income between 200-400% of poverty.

PROPOSED CHANGES (estimated dates):

November 2003-February 2004: Enrollment closed and wait list established for adult in CommonHealth, Insurance Partnership, and HIV+ Family Assistance programs.

January 2004: New coverage for women with breast or cervical cancer.

January 2004: Prior authorization required for therapy visits of more than eight physical therapy, eight occupational therapy and fifteen S/LT visits in a 12-month period.

February 2004: Addition of an asset eligibility test for adults under age 65.

February 2004: Pharmacy co-payments for generic drugs lowed to \$1, for brand name raised to \$3, subject to \$200 annual cap. Co-payments of \$3 for non-emergency use of ER and \$3 for an acute inpatient hospital stay, subject to \$36 annual cap. Further service co-pays planned.

Note that in November 2003, the legislature passed a supplemental budget which provided that if money is available, seniors and people with disabilities who previously qualified as special status immigrants would be enrolled in MassHealth Essential. The Governor vetoed this provision. The legislature is expected to take up vetoes in January.

Stay tuned for more information in future newsletters...

*Take action!!!
Join the
Policy Committee!*

Advocating for Access Training *(continued from page 1)*

Also, they are being trained to be effective advocates for their own profession and organizations.

Other topics addressed included how to effectively network, with other organizations and individuals in the community, and with other statewide organizations. In addition, effective grassroots organizing,

barriers to effective advocacy and strategies for breaking through these barriers were discussed.

Thanks to a number of people for the collaborative effort involved in planning and implementing these trainings: Pam McBurnie, Chair of MACHW Training and Career Development Committee; Peggy Hogarty, Director of

CHEC; the trainers: Durrell Fox, Sharon Henderson, Stephanie Legatos, Lisa Renee Siciliano, and Julie Wisniewski; the MACHW Board of Directors and MACHW staff, Allison Bauer. Most importantly, a special thanks to all of our participants who are helping to pave the way for community health workers.



Videographer
Tatyana Gorodetsky



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Community
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2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MACHW Statewide Meetings

*All meetings are on Thursdays from
10am-12pm unless otherwise noted.*

March 18
June 17
September 23
December 16

Southeast Regional meetings

For more information, contact Pam
Smith at Pamela.smith@state.ma.us

Western Mass. Regional meetings

For more information, contact Pam
Smith at Pamela.smith@state.ma.us

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February/March: Health Care For
All's Policy & Organizing
Conference. For more information,
contact Denise Lau at 617-275-2926
or lau@hcfama.org.

For the People, Against the Tide is
Health Care For All's annual
celebration that honors unsung
heroes in health care. Nominations
are now open – applications are due
by January 12, 2004. For a
nomination form, please contact
Denise Lau at 617-275-2926 or
lau@hcfama.org or go online to
[http://www.hcfama.org/acrobat/Nomi
nation_form.pdf](http://www.hcfama.org/acrobat/Nomination_form.pdf).

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