

## **CHW Literature Review Methodology**

This document describes the methodology used to update the literature matrix for the Minnesota Community Health Workers Alliance (MN CHW Alliance) website. This work was conducted by the MN CHW Alliance's Research Subcommittee (see below).

The goal of the literature review is to document the effectiveness of Community Health Workers (CHW) on population health focusing on the following areas: (1) cost efficiency/return on investment; (2) health outcomes; (3) quality of care. The matrix is a resource for Alliance members, providers, policymakers, media and the general public wishing to learn more about CHW contributions to reducing health disparities and fostering healthy communities.

The literature search drew from the following databases;

- Ovid Medline
- Pubmed
- Google Scholar
- CINAHL

The keywords for the search included: Community Health Workers (which expanded to draw on all related terms such as peer educator, promotoros, etc.), cost and quality.

Ovid Medline yielded the most comprehensive listing of articles and overlapped with resources from the other databases, therefore we describe our results from Ovid Medline here.

The Alliance Research subcommittee developed parameters for the literature search which included articles published within the last 5 years, articles available in English, studies conducted in the U.S. given differences in health systems around the world, and a focus on empirical articles demonstrating the effectiveness of CHWs across the range of outcomes in line with the goals of the research.

As shown in Figure 1, the initial yield of articles numbered 4031. Limiting the search to studies published between 2007–2013 and available in the English language produced a total of 1490 articles. Further restricting the focus to studies done in the U.S reduced the number of articles to 344. Duplicate articles, articles that mention and do not focus on CHWs, and

studies describing a CHW intervention or program without inclusion of empirical results were removed leaving 160 articles. Focusing on journal articles, systematic reviews, meta-analysis, clinical trials, randomized controlled trials and validation studies, yielded a total of 57 articles. We do not abstract systematic reviews; instead we list these reviews in a separate bibliography for interested reader (see “Listing of Recent CHW-Related Literature Reviews”). Abstracted articles will be added to the matrix on an ongoing basis.

**Figure 1: Literature Review Methodology**

\* Ongoing task of adding articles to research matrix

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