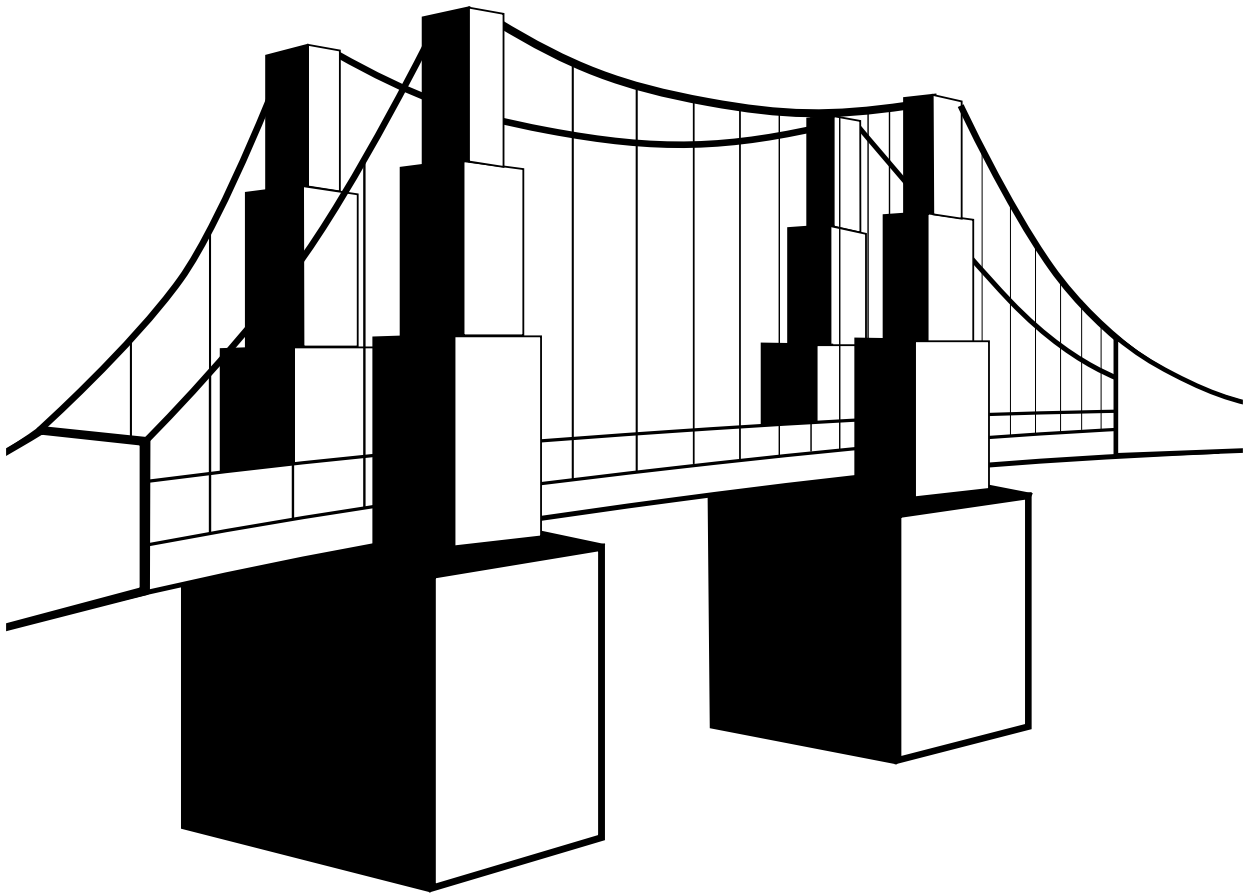


# A Handbook for Enhancing Community Health Worker Programs: Guidance From the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program

## Part 1



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

**CDC**  
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL  
AND PREVENTION

**NTC** Division of Cancer  
Prevention and Control  
National Training Center

## **BACKGROUND**

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act of 1990 authorized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to start a national program to help prevent deaths from breast and cervical cancer. This program ensures that women receive regular screening for breast and cervical cancer, prompt followup if needed, and assurance that the tests are performed according to current recommendations for quality assurance. CDC carries out many of these activities through partnerships with State and Territorial health agencies, American Indian/Alaska Native organizations, and other national organizations. In 1997, CDC began the seventh year of this landmark national program. The program continues to bring critical screening services for breast and cervical cancer to older medically underserved women, including women who have low income, are uninsured or underinsured, or belong to a racial/ethnic minority group.

Fifty States, 5 territories, the District of Columbia, and 13 American Indian/Alaska Native organizations now participate in the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. CDC provides national program leadership in collaboration with other Federal agencies and professional, national, voluntary, and consumer organizations.

Developed by  
National Training Center for the Prevention and Early Detection of Cancer (NTC)  
R.O.W. Sciences, Inc.  
Rockville, Maryland

March 1998

This handbook was supported by contract no. 200-95-0056 from the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC or R.O.W. Sciences.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

A sincere thanks is extended to all representatives of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP), who spent numerous hours helping the materials development staff understand the needs of community health worker programs. This enabled the National Training Center for the Prevention and Early Detection of Cancer (NTC) to design appropriate materials for the intended audience—people who develop or manage community health worker programs in a variety of health care settings and community outreach programs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NTC also gratefully acknowledge the talented individuals who contributed to the design and development of this handbook.

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## INTRODUCTION

Because a great deal of expertise exists within a community, it makes sense to develop partnerships between providers of health care services and community members. Community health workers are members of the community who are fluent in and sensitive to the language and culture of the audience that health care programs want to reach with positive health messages. They can serve as a bridge between providers of health care services and the community.

The primary aim of community health workers is to help people in their community understand health behaviors, recognize health options, think for themselves, and make decisions that will improve their health. Community health workers help community members gain an awareness of health outcomes that result from individual choices. Community health workers also are often active leaders in their communities who serve as advocates for community members.

*A Handbook for Enhancing Community Health Worker Programs* draws on experience from CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. The handbook provides guidance for developing and managing community health worker programs that cover a broad array of health issues (e.g., diabetes, maternal and child health). The accompanying packet—*Breast and Cervical Cancer Messages for Community Health Worker Programs: A Training Packet*—is designed to help existing community health worker programs reach older medically underserved women with information about the early detection of breast and cervical cancer.

Health care providers can use this handbook to gain a quick and thorough overview of the program development issues to address when starting a community health worker program. The handbook also describes the unique contributions of community health workers as team members. Understanding the program development issues and contributions of community health workers can help health professionals correct the myth that community health workers are not as able as professionals to perform certain tasks related to health care.

Community health worker programs are a social model intervention. They may be more appropriate than more traditional medical programs that rely heavily on health care providers (e.g., nurses, social workers, doctors). Whether or not the use of community health workers is appropriate depends on a program's goals and objectives.

## Audience

This handbook is for people who develop or manage community health worker programs in established health care settings and community outreach programs, such as

- Migrant farmworker programs;
- Rural and urban community health center programs;
- Church-based community programs;
- Community health representative programs in American Indian communities;
- Community health advisor programs;
- Lay health worker programs;
- The American Cancer Society;
- ENCORE<sup>PLUS</sup> of the YWCA of the U.S.A.; and
- State and local health department programs that use community health workers in areas such as maternal and child health; family support services; adult health; home health; and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

## How To Use This Handbook

This handbook and the overview on pages 4 and 5 describe six key components of effective community health worker programs as defined by the CDC-funded National Training Center for the Prevention and Early Detection of Cancer (NTC):



Community Assessment



Program Planning



Recruitment



Training



Management and Maintenance



Evaluation

These components represent a synthesis of the most current state-of-the-art information available. Together they serve as a framework for developing and managing effective community health worker programs. By reading this section and developing action steps for applying what you learn, you will build skills in community assessment; program planning; recruiting, training, and managing and maintaining community health workers; and evaluating community health worker programs.



Action Steps Template

Before you begin reading this handbook, review the Action Steps Template on page 33. As you complete each subsection, jot down ideas on the template for how you can apply what you have learned. Using this tool will help you identify ways to improve your community health worker program.

### **Bibliography and Additional Resources**

The final section of the handbook contains a bibliography and additional resources for information on breast and cervical cancer, persuasive communication, community assessment and program planning, recruitment, training, management and maintenance, and evaluation of community health worker programs.

This handbook was developed to complement *Breast and Cervical Cancer Messages for Community Health Worker Programs: A Training Packet*. If you are involved in training community health workers and would like to expand the scope of work of your community health workers to include messages to promote breast and cervical cancer screening, please refer to the training packet.