



**Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island (CHI-RI)** improves the health of all Rhode Island citizens by building the community health worker workforce, which builds community.

Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island established in January 2011 is a synergistic social venture to develop, train and prepare community health workers to increase the health, equity and quality of life in the populations they serve.

### **Description of service**

Community Health Workers are an emerging profession who:

- Support our healthcare system and communities.
- Connect with and care for our vulnerable community members.
- Support and assist in navigating the health and social services agencies.
- Provide individual and community engagement, education, and advocacy.
- Build community through workshops, research, and programs.

CHWs are the way to engage, activate and advocate for the vulnerable communities to improve the community's health. Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island promotes the recognition and development of this valuable workforce through education and policy. CHI-RI's curriculums are purposely cultivated in the community at the grass roots level for those facing numerous challenges and health disparities.

The program was designed to stand alone or comprise part of an entry level career path for diverse underrepresented communities. With an emphasis on nationally recognized core-skills, our program prepares CHWs with skills that can work between several types of positions (or employers). From our worker train the trainer models, to CCRI level class work, CHI-RI aims to educate, support, evaluate and develop the CHW workforce. By being part of the process to develop and grow this workforce, CHI-RI works to create a level playing field for vulnerable communities. The efforts and programs' focus is on taking action to make a difference.

In Rhode Island, CHI-RI offers the only community-centered, entry-level and nationally recognized core-skills program for this growing job market. CHI-RI Courses and Workshops:

- Provide CHI-RI facilitator trainings to increase the capacity to deliver entry level CHI curriculum across RI
- Provide an entry level program that is sensitive to adult education needs.

CHWs can increase enrollment in health insurance, initiate service development in communities, increase clients' use of community resources and collect data to inform policy.

The CHI-RI CHW certificate course complements workforce development including career pipeline/path opportunity linked with CCRI efforts with recognized transferable credits by creating more community based educational opportunities, service provisions and capacity building.

In addition, CHI-RI complements this year's legislation to create a Commission of Health Advocacy and Equity, <http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText11/SenateText11/S0481A.pdf>. The commission is asked to work to diversify the healthcare workforce and to "make recommendations for the coordination of state, local and private sector efforts to develop a more racially and ethnically diverse health care workforce. Such recommendations shall include the evaluation and development of the community health workforce." CHI-RI CHW programs will add to the development of promising practices for the CHW workforce and add to build a diversified healthcare workforce.