



CHW ORAL HEALTH TRAINING PROGRAM

Incorporating CHWs into the Dental Team

SESSION 5



This session was developed to help both CHWs and providers understand their roles and responsibilities.

This training was funded by the Office of Oral Health, California Department of Public Health Contract 23-10605 and developed by the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Dentistry.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS (CHWS)



Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline professionals who are trusted members of their communities and can play a valuable role on a dental team.

CHWs can contribute to:

- Health education
- Outreach and enrollment
- Advocacy
- Support and counseling
- Community engagement

DENTAL PROVIDERS IN CALIFORNIA

California:

- Has **hundreds of federally designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas**, the most of any state.
- Faces both rural and urban shortages, with many communities lacking adequate dental access.
- Has regions with extremely limited or nonexistent dental provider availability.



These shortages persist despite California having a relatively high overall number of dentists, underscoring that the primary issue is **uneven distribution and access**, not merely provider counts.

CHW JOB TITLES

CHW services are **preventive health services** to help patients with disease, disability, and other chronic health conditions.

CHWs may include individuals known by a variety of job titles:

- Promotoras
- Community health representatives
- Navigators
- Care coordinators
- Health counselors
- Other non-licensed public health workers



CHWS IN DENTAL CARE

Core Responsibilities

- Educating patients on oral health
- Connecting patients to dental care resources
- Providing culturally sensitive care
- Helping patients navigate healthcare systems
- Advocating for underserved communities

Key Skills

- Communication
- Community engagement
- Counseling in a culturally-sensitive manner
- Care coordination
- Basic clinical support (essential services/administrative support to improve patient experience)

ROLES OF CHWS WITH A SPECIALTY IN ORAL HEALTH

Health Education & Promotion

CHWs educate individuals & families on:

- Good oral hygiene such as brushing, flossing, and regular dental checkups
- How oral health is linked to overall health

CHWs help individuals & families access dental services by:

- Connecting patients with providers
- Helping navigate insurance issues
- Providing referrals



ROLES OF CHWS WITH A SPECIALTY IN ORAL HEALTH

Advocacy & Support

- To increase utilization of dental services in underserved communities
- To provide guidance for patients about insurance benefits and eligibility for certain public programs like Medicaid

Overcoming Cultural Barriers

- CHWs are often from the communities they serve
- CHWs offer culturally sensitive care and break down language barriers



CHWS IN ORAL HEALTH

CHWs play a critical role in oral health. They...

- **Bridge gaps** by helping individuals access essential oral health care services.
- **Promote healthy behaviors** by educating communities on oral health.
- **Lead prevention campaigns** that focus on oral disease prevention.
- **Provide early intervention** in order to prevent the progression of oral health conditions that can lead to other health complications.



CHWS IN ORAL HEALTH

Other impacts of CHWs' in oral health include:

Reducing Health Disparities by

- Addressing cultural, linguistic, geographic and socioeconomic barriers to care
- Targeting vulnerable populations: children, elderly, low-income individuals, racial/ethnic minorities, etc.

Promoting Integration of Oral Health and General Health by

- Raising awareness
- Collaborating with other healthcare workers
- Connecting with other CHWs, social workers, etc.



IMPORTANCE OF CHWS IN ADDRESSING DISPARITIES

Barriers that contribute to dental health disparities in underserved populations:

- **Geographic barriers:** Individuals living in rural areas may have to travel a long distance to reach a dental clinic.
- **Financial barriers:** Dental care is often not covered or partially covered by insurance.
- **Limited providers:** Underserved areas have a limited number of dental providers.

CHWs can help address these barriers through care coordination and navigation, patient education, and culturally- and linguistically-appropriate care.



CARE COORDINATION & PATIENT NAVIGATION SUPPORT IN DENTISTRY

Ways CHWS can support care coordination & patient navigation:

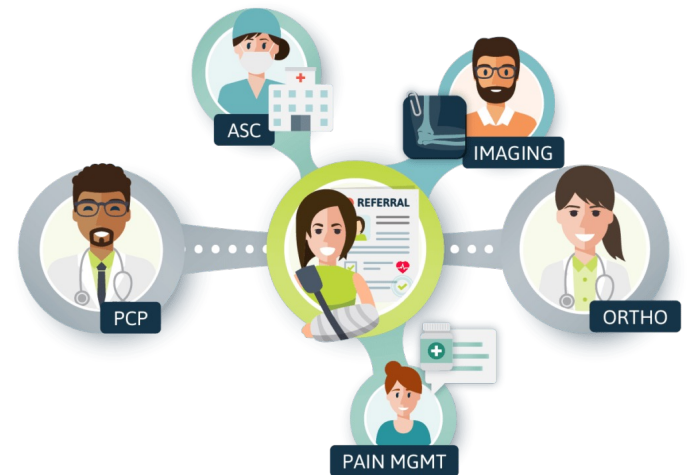
1. Remind parents to tell their dentist about:

- Their main reason for visiting the dentist (chief complaint)
- Any current or previous medical conditions
- Any medicines they are currently taking, ongoing treatments, surgeries, hospitalizations, allergies, and vaccination status
- Their dental history, including oral health habits, maintenance, experience of dental decay, changes in their mouth, and history of pain and treatments

2. Increase oral health literacy by providing oral health education and resources

3. Provide health education to support the dental visit

4. Remind parents to schedule recall appointments





INTEGRATING CHWS SERVICES INTO A DENTAL PRACTICE

THE CHW ROLE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR DENTAL TEAM

Key benefits:

- Increased patient adherence to oral hygiene routines
- Focused time spent on Caries Risk Assessment
- Education on cavity prevention through diet and nutrition
- Time taken to explain oral health and hygiene
- Improved access to dental care in rural areas
- Higher satisfaction rates among patients and providers
- Effective use of teledentistry

HOW TO TRAIN CHWS FOR YOUR DENTAL TEAM

- **Essential training information:**
 - Oral health basics and prevention
 - Communication and cultural competence
 - Referral systems and care coordination
 - Telehealth Principles

**All contents found in modules of this
program curriculum**

- Collaboration with dental schools and professional organizations
- Certification and continuing education opportunities



STRATEGIES FOR FULL UTILIZATION OF CHWS

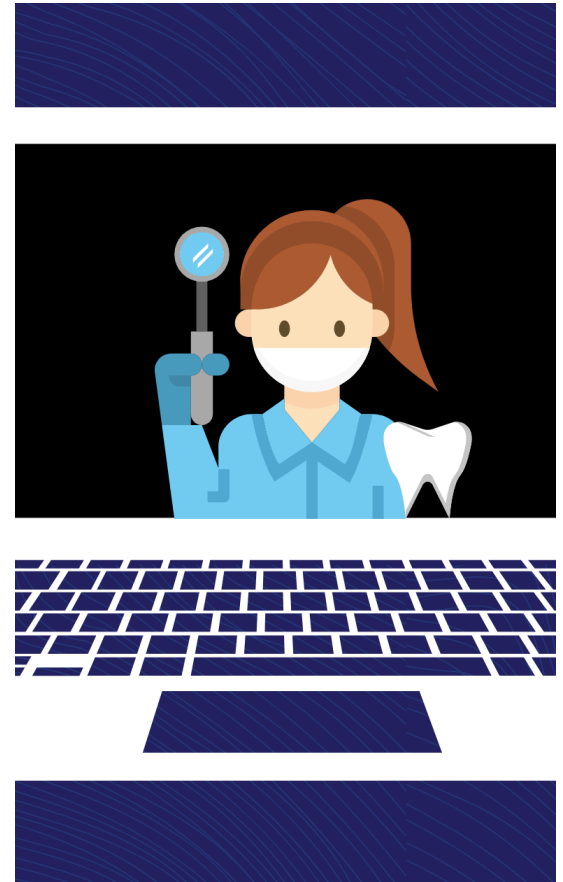
- Create clear roles within dental teams.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to refine roles.
- Through CHWs, find ways to build trust with the community.
- Leverage CHWs' community connections for:
 - Preventative care outreach
 - Follow-ups and compliance
 - Care coordination



TELEHEALTH PROTOCOLS

Steps for a CHW conducting a Telehealth visit one to two (1-2) days prior to an in-person dental visit at your practice:

1. Conduct a Caries Risk Assessment (risk and protective factor sections) using the appropriate CAMBRA form.
2. Review patient's medical history and any additional documents.
3. Review pictures of the patient's teeth and discuss any concerns.
4. Discuss preparation/procedure for in-person visit and document the telehealth appointment including appropriate CDT codes.



TELEHEALTH PROTOCOLS

Steps for a CHW Conducting a Dental Follow-Up Telehealth Visit

1. Review clinical findings from the in-person appointment.
2. Review the Caries Risk Assessment results.
3. Provide anticipatory guidance, including discussing and working with the parent to set self-management goals.
4. Provide follow-up guidance and support for establishing a dental home.
5. Work with the parent to schedule their next appointment.
6. Document the telehealth appointment, including appropriate CDT codes.



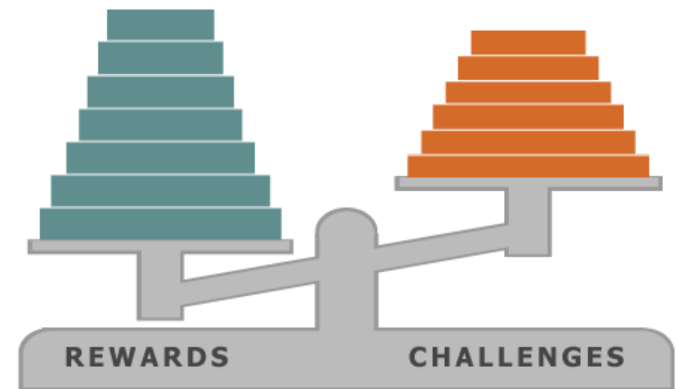
CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR INCORPORATING CHWS

Challenges:

- Funding and sustainability
- Role recognition within dental teams
- Training gaps

Solutions:

- Advocacy for CHW funding
- Policy changes to formalize CHW roles
- Development of standardized training programs



POLICY AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Medicaid and public health programs supporting CHWs
- Potential grant opportunities:
 - National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)
 - State health departments
- Advocacy for policy reforms





CHW GUIDELINES

HOW CHWS CAN
PROVIDE ORAL
HEALTH
EDUCATION

CHWS CAN COMMUNICATE WITH & GUIDE YOUR PATIENTS

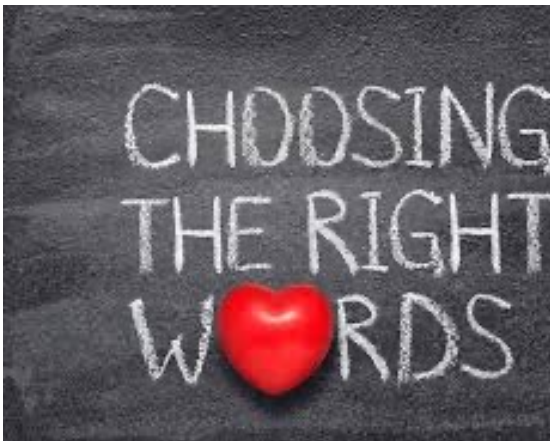


1. Use of accessible language

CHWs can help patients understand medical terms, health conditions, and treatments by providing information in plain, simple language that avoids difficult terms.

2. Acting as a bridge between patients and providers

A CHW acts as a bridge between the health care provider and patient to improve communication and help the patient understand their medical condition and treatment plan.



CHWS CAN CONNECT WITH & SUPPORT YOUR PATIENTS



3. Connecting communities and individuals to information and resources

CHWs provide health education and information regarding vaccines, oral health, disease prevention, and other health-related topics.

4. Supporting health literacy skills

A CHW can help patients develop and improve health literacy skills by providing resources on how to access and understand health information. Infographics and charts can be provided to help understand the content.

CHWs CAN MOTIVATE YOUR PATIENTS

5. Collaboration with caregivers through Motivational Interviewing.

CHWs can empower patients/caregivers to manage their oral health and the oral health of their child through the collaborative conversation style known as Motivational Interviewing (MI). MI strengthens the patient's own motivation and commitment to change by setting manageable goals.

The basic skills of MI are represented by the acronym OARS:

- Open-ended Questions
- Affirmations
- Reflective Listening
- Summarizing



CLAIMS AND BILLING OVERVIEW

WHAT CHWS & DENTISTS NEED TO KNOW TO BILL FOR CHW SERVICES



CLAIM SUBMISSION CRITERIA

BILLING CODE D9994

- Dental case management – Patient education to improve oral health literacy
- Claims must be submitted by the Medi-Cal enrolled dental supervising provider.

MAXIMUM FREQUENCY

- Maximum of four (4) units, or two (2) hours, daily per member for any provider
- Capped at twelve (12) units per member, per year
- One (1) unit = thirty (30) minutes

COVERED DENTAL SERVICES FOR D9994

ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION	ORAL HEALTH NAVIGATION	SCREENING & ASSESSMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote members' oral health• Address barriers to dental care• Provide information aligned with recognized oral health standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist members in accessing oral healthcare• Connect members to resources like dental translation/interpretation staff and transportation services• Serve as a cultural liaison or assist in creating a care plan• Facilitate outreach and care coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-licensed assessments that connect members to appropriate services for improving oral health

DENTAL CASE MANAGEMENT FOR BILLING CODE D9994

Must have written documentation which includes:

1. Name of Community Health Worker that provided the training
2. Number of patients present at the training
3. Time of training session (i.e., 12:30 PM-1:00 PM)

Remember:

- A Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) is required when a patient will exceed 12 units per year. The supervising provider must submit a TAR along with documentation supporting the medical necessity and plan of care if they want to go beyond the twelve (12) units per year per member.

BILLING CODE D9995

- Synchronous teledentistry, real-time encounter
- Paid per minute: \$0.24/minute
- Procedure payable up to ninety (90) minutes
- This code cannot be used for dental assistant time, provider-initiated calls to the patients, or time spent contacting a pharmacy.
- Written documentation should include the number of minutes for the encounter
- D9994 can be provided via teledentistry as D9995, but Medi-Cal Dental will NOT pay for the D9995 code (in this case)
- If D9994 is billed with asynchronous teledentistry D9996, D9994 will be denied and not paid.

REIMBURSEMENT FEE TABLE

CDT Code	Length of time	Number of member (s)	Rate Per Member	Maximum Reimbursement without TAR
D9994 - each 30 minutes; individual patient	30 Minutes (1 Unit)	1	\$26.66	1 member: \$106.64
D9994 - each 30 minutes; 2-4 patients	30 Minutes (1 Unit)	2-4	\$12.66	2 members: \$101.28 3 members: \$151.92 4 members: \$202.56
D9994 - each 30 minutes; 5-8 patients	30 Minutes (1 Unit)	5-8	\$9.46	5 members: \$189.20 6 members: \$227.04 7 members: \$264.88 8 members: \$302.72

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. What do CHWs need to do to get their providers reimbursed for the services rendered?**
 - CHWs must be under the supervision of a Medi-Cal dental provider.
- 2. What is the criteria from the California Medicaid office to pay for this service?**
 - The patient must be a Medi-Cal beneficiary.
 - The service must be delivered face-to-face or via synchronous teledentistry.
 - The service must be non-clinical. It must be focused on education, navigation, and oral health literacy, not on performing clinical dental procedures.

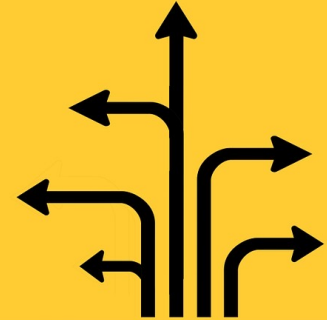
WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CHW SERVICES?

Patients who are eligible for CHW services include those with:

- Chronic health conditions
- Mental health disorders
- Substance use disorder
- Domestic or intimate partner violence
- Unmet health-related social needs, such as insecure housing
- Need for help in navigating the healthcare system
- CHW services are part of the Enhanced Care Management and Community Supports offered by managed care plans in California.
- CHW services in dentistry can be recommended by licensed practitioners.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Expanding CHW roles in teledentistry
- Enhancing data collection and impact measurement
- Fostering partnerships between public health, academia, and dental providers



CALL TO ACTION

- Invest in CHW training and integration
- Advocate for systemic support and funding
- Collaborate with CHWs to create patient-centered dental care systems
- Empower CHWs to shape the future of oral health
- Work with CHWs to support new technology development



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