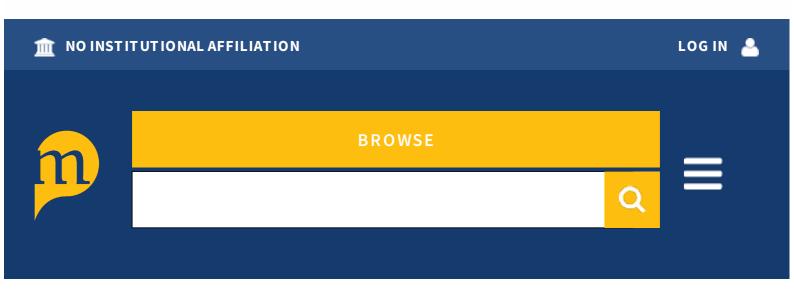
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Measuring return on investment of outreach by community health workers.



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Elizabeth M. Whitley, Rachel M. Everhart, Richard A. Wright Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved Johns Hopkins University Press Volume 17, Number 1, February 2006 pp. 6-15 10.1353/hpu.2006.0015

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Abstract

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Elizabeth M. Whitley, PhD, RN Rachel M. Everhart, MS Richard A. Wright, MD, MPH

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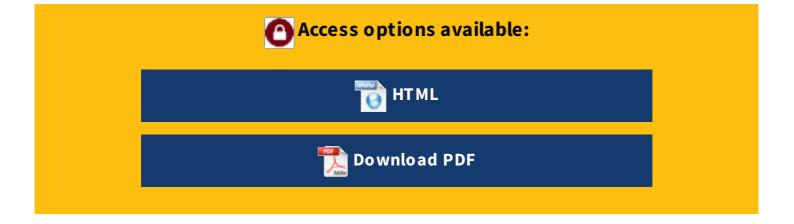
Key words: Community health worker, cost effectiveness, return on investment, outreach.

Community health workers (CHWs) deliver necessary health care services to underserved populations in many capacities, including providing culturally relevant health education, care management, system navigation, and enrollment in publicly funded health insurance. Community health workers, also known as promatoras, lay health workers, or community health advisors, are trusted members of their communities who provide community-based health services and vital links between health systems and communities. 12

Evaluation of CHW services and programs across the U.S. vary widely. Most commonly, data are collected to reflect process measures, such as the number of clients seen, applications taken, or referrals given. ^{3,4} However, some CHW programs have outcomes data to demonstrate effectiveness of CHW interventions. ⁴⁵ In fact, the CHW literature provides support for CHWs improving access through the provision of health screening, patient navigation, and referrals to primary care providers, ^{6,7,8} promoting client knowledge and behavior change (primarily through health education), ^{8,10} and contributing to improved health status of patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension. ¹¹

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