



CHW Support Leads to Improved Care for Pediatric Patient

Avera Community Health Resource Center CHWs have a cultural understanding of the communities that they serve.

The Avera Community Health Resource Center opened near the Empower Campus in eastern Sioux Falls, SD. The location was intentional: refugees and immigrants know the space as a place to find helpful support. What sets Avera’s Community Health Resource Center CHWs apart is their shared lived experience with the immigrant and refugee communities they support. Moreover, the CHWs collectively speak over 16 different languages. This deep understanding allows them to recognize and address the unique realities, challenges, and aspirations of these communities, which might otherwise be overlooked. By forging these bonds of trust and empathy, Avera’s CHWs work tirelessly to improve the overall health and well-being of the diverse populations they serve.

PATIENT BACKGROUND

One of the organization’s CHWs was contacted regarding a child with several medical issues, one of which necessitates tube-feedings. Typically, the school nurse is responsible for providing the feedings, though at one point the child was absent from school for nearly a month. During the last administration of tube-feedings by the nurse, three cockroaches crawled out of the tube at the point of entry into the child’s body. This situation raises significant health and safety concerns.

Prior to this incident, the family had declined interpreters from Avera due to a lack of trust within their community toward healthcare systems. Consequently, there was uncertainty surrounding the family’s willingness to accept aid in addressing the current issue.



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**- ANGELA SCHOFFELMAN,
CHW PROGRAM MANAGER,
AVERA HEALTH**

SERVICES PROVIDED

As required, the nurse filed CPS report. The CHW met with the family during a scheduled appointment with the healthcare provider. With compassion and empathy, the CHW offered support and assistance to the family to address the underlying issues affecting their child's health.

During the meeting, the CHW discovered that the family had previously raised concerns about the persistent cockroach infestation with their landlord, but no action had been taken to resolve the matter. Understanding the critical role of the living environment in the child's well-being, as well as the family's, the CHW promptly contacted and arranged for the services of a professional exterminator to address the pest issue effectively.

PATIENT SUCCESSES

The CHW's efforts aimed to address the family's living environment and foster trust within their community. With the CHW's intervention, the exterminator efficiently eradicated the cockroach infestation, and a plan for follow-up visits was established to ensure a healthier living environment for the family. This proactive approach has laid the foundation for improved living conditions and better overall health outcomes for the child.

Moreover, the positive impact of the assistance provided by the CHW has resonated beyond the individual family. Trust in healthcare services increased within the family's community. This newfound trust has opened doors to increased access to healthcare for the entire community, paving the way for more accessible healthcare.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Avera Health is an integrated health system based in Sioux Falls, SD, and serves South Dakota and surrounding areas of Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and North Dakota through six regional centers in Aberdeen, Mitchell, Pierre, Sioux Falls, and Yankton, SD, and Marshall, MN. The Health System includes 37 hospitals, 215 primary and specialty care clinics, 40 senior living facilities in addition to home care and hospice, sports and wellness facilities, home medical equipment outlets, and additional services.

To learn more about the Avera Community Health Resource Center, visit <https://www.avera.org/balance/mission/avera-community-health-care-workers-create-connections-for-diver/>.

This CHW success story was submitted by Angela Schoeffelman, CHW Program Manager for Avera Health, angela.schoeffelman@chwsd.org.

