



CHW Helps Family Get Improved Care for Pediatric Patient

Avera Community Health Resource Center CHWs use care and cultural understanding to aid the communities 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.



**avera’s
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**- ANGELA SCHOFFELMAN,
CHW PROGRAM MANAGER,
AVERA HEALTH**

PATIENT BACKGROUND

A CHW received a referral to provide assistance to the non-English speaking parents of a child with Down Syndrome. It became evident to the care team that the parents had a limited understanding of the severity of their child’s diagnosis and had, in fact, only recently become aware of the diagnosis. This lack of understanding led to many missed appointments. Another challenge the family faced was transportation difficulty caused by opposite work schedules. After some research, the CHW discovered that the family’s community holds a belief that such conditions stem from birth control, which causes deep shame. As a result, the family initially struggled to acknowledge and address the diagnosis seriously. There is also the challenge of mistrust in the healthcare system by immigrant and refugee communities, as they can sometimes feel like they are being tricked.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The CHW has been invaluable in facilitating effective communication and understanding between the family and the healthcare provider. The CHW played a crucial role in interpreting and conveying essential information to the parents, ensuring they comprehended the significance of specialty care for their child. By bridging this communication gap, the CHW created a comforting connection that alleviated the parents' sense of shame, enabling them to embrace the necessary medical interventions to ensure quality care for their child.

Additionally, the CHW recognized the challenges the family faced in attending appointments due to conflicting work schedules. The CHW collaborated with a care team nurse to assist the family in enrolling for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This not only provided the parents with job-protected leave but also eased their concerns about transportation barriers, ensuring they can prioritize their child's healthcare needs without compromising their livelihoods.

PATIENT SUCCESSES

The patient's journey has been marked by significant success, with crucial barriers being overcome to ensure access to essential health services. Previously, the family faced challenges qualifying for Medicaid, which posed a substantial cost barrier to receiving the necessary medical care for their child. However, the child's condition qualified them for Medicaid coverage. This has relieved the family of the financial barrier that was previously present, ensuring that their child can access the specialized care they require without undue financial strain.

The CHW also allowed for open communication and trust between the family and healthcare services. The CHW facilitated conversations about transportation assistance, which the family accepted. As a result of the CHW's support, the family's confidence and trust in the healthcare system has grown, ensuring that the child receives the care they need while empowering the family to navigate their healthcare journey with confidence.

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.



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