



CHW Enables Patient to Access Important Healthcare Services

Huron Regional Medical Center CHW empowers patients to access critical healthcare services.

The Community Health Worker (CHW) program at Huron Regional Medical Center (HRMC) is a key initiative in the hospital's mission to ensure accessible health care to all individuals in the seven-county service area, including immigrant and refugee populations. With Huron's highly diverse population, HRMC strives to help bridge the gap in health care with programs that support both patients and workforce.

The Community Health Worker (CHW) program is designed to support and assist those populations in not only navigating the healthcare system, but also in developing connections within the community to increase utilization of available resources. The HRMC CHW team possesses cultural competence and shares lived experiences with the communities they serve, enabling them to recognize and understand the unique challenges and realities faced by these populations.

New New Win has worked as a CHW at HRMC since October 2022. "The work we do is not only bridging the gap between patients and community health resources, but developing our own connections within our communities to offer trusted support where its needed most," expressed Win.

PATIENT BACKGROUND

The patient is a 76-year old female with diabetes and no family support. She is unemployed and resides in a low-income apartment. She relies on food stamps and Medicaid for her essential needs. This patient does not speak English, which has created another barrier for seeking healthcare services.



THE INTENT OF HRMC'S CHW PROGRAM IS TO BRIDGE THE GAP FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO NEED ASSISTANCE NAVIGATING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AS WELL AS ACCESSING COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

- BROOKE SYDOW, PROGRAM MANAGER, HURON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

This patient has been assisted by a CHW regarding her chronic medical condition, living situation, and scheduling preventative healthcare screenings.

SERVICES PROVIDED

HRMC received a referral from Horizon Healthcare for CHW assistance due to the patient's diagnosis of diabetes. The CHW arranged transportation for the patient to meet with a dietitian, attended the meeting to ensure understanding of the importance of diet modifications and use of medication. The CHW arranged transportation for the patient to meet her at the grocery store to assist in food label translation to ensure proper food choices based upon her medical condition. Upon building a relationship with the patient, the CHW assisted with applications for aid, including energy assistance, and gaining basic living necessities such as a bed and furniture. Additionally, the CHW continued to coordinate transportation for follow up appointments and contacted the pharmacy for further explanation of how to take new medications. The CHW ensured that the patient's living conditions were improved and dignified, and continued to build a relationship with the client to work toward preventative healthcare screenings. The CHW helped explain the process, importance and necessity of a colonoscopy procedure, including scheduling a colonoscopy for the patient, which ultimately detected cancer. The CHW has remained a vital support person for the patient.

To address financial concerns, the CHW facilitated the establishment of a monthly payment plan and helped the patient set up recurring utility payments, ensuring continuity and avoiding service disruptions. The CHW also provided ongoing support in managing payments, effectively acting as a liaison between the patient and service providers to bridge language barriers.

PATIENT SUCCESSES

Throughout the patient's cancer treatment, the CHW has been a source of encouragement, meeting with her one to two times per week to provide reassurance and moral support. As the patient lacks family in the area, the CHW's visits have also played a crucial role in offering essential social support during this challenging period. Moreover, the education provided by the CHW has empowered the patient to make informed decisions regarding her healthcare, leading her to opt for a procedure during which cancer was detected. This early detection would not have been possible without the procedure, emphasizing the critical impact of the CHW's guidance. As part of the patient's overall progress, the CHW has set the goal of fostering independence by helping her learn to arrange transportation and appointments for herself. The CHW enhanced the patient's living conditions and also empowered her to prioritize her health and overall well-being by improving her knowledge and access to healthcare services.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Huron Regional Medical Center is a designated 25-bed critical access hospital, whose mission and core values are to serve the greater Huron area by delivering knowledgeable, helpful and easily accessible services. As the rural area's only hospital, HRMC plays a crucial role in ensuring accessible healthcare by offering state of the art technology and a magnitude of services to its seven county service area. With Huron's highly diverse population, HRMC strives to help bridge the gap in healthcare for the immigrant and refugee populations through programs that support both patients and workforce.

This CHW success story was submitted by New New Win, CHW for Huron Regional Medical Center.

