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## Community Health Worker

Community Health Workers (CHW) build awareness and skills surrounding high blood pressure, diabetes, breast health, nutrition, exercise and mental health. Northwest Family Services (NWFS) has a staff of nine bi-lingual, bi-cultural certified Community Health workers. In addition to helping the mainstream population, this program helps to improve the cultural competency of health systems to reduce the health disparities faced by communities of color. NWFS also works in a partnership with other community health workers through a collaborative know as, Warriors of Wellness (WOW).

WOW Community Health Workers show dedication and passion through complex issues which affect multiple communities, such as lack of adequate access to services, cultural and language barriers and history of violence and trauma. The community-based organizations in the WOW collaborative have the ability to recognize and respond to community identified issues at individual and community levels with a wide array of activities and services.

WOW CHWs are members of the communities most affected by health disparities in our region and are able to bridge the gap between these communities and the health system. The WOW collaborative has built a model for health systems to contract for the services of community-based CHWs. One demonstration project which connected a Spanish-speaking CHW with a Kaiser Permanente clinic has shown promising results:

*“Having Guadalupe (NWFS Community Health Worker), embedded in the back office at our clinic has been paramount in communicating with those members with whom we were previously unable to contact via phone or in person. There have been numerous instances where Guadalupe has been able to complete home visits and break down cultural barriers. Guadalupe was able to provide an ‘eyes and ears’ approach that our team needed to gather those missing puzzle pieces our providers needed in order to develop a holistic care plan for those members.”*

—Administrator, Kaiser Permanente Mt. Scott Medical Office

