**Community Health Worker Non-credit Certificate Program**

**Program/Grant Info**

The College of Health Related Professions at SUNY Downstate Medical Center is currently offering five individuals, who have an interest in starting careers in health care, the opportunity to take part in a Community Health Worker non-credit certificate program. This is program is supported by a grant from the New York State Department of Health, Health Workforce Retraining Initiative.

**What is a CHW?**

Community Health Workers serve as connectors between health care consumers and medical providers to promote health among groups that traditionally lacked access to adequate care. By identifying community problems, developing innovative solutions and translating them into practice, community health workers can creatively respond to the needs of those in their individual communities. With a focus on community health, patient engagement, developmental, behavioral and mental health, students in the CHW Certificate Program will acquire all the skills necessary to take on the demands of a community health worker. The curriculum will also focus on major chronic illnesses that New Yorkers face such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease.

**Goals**

Community Health workers are essential in providing a bridge between the community and health providers. Through assessments of social determinants of health and communication with providers, worsening of self-managed chronic illnesses can be decreased. Community health workers also aim to decrease hospitalization and ER visits caused by deficits in health care coordination. Community Health Workers also serve to initiate patient education, promote self-management of chronic illness and empower patients to become self-advocates. Through one-on-one communication with patients, community health workers can increase access to care by determining factors outside of the clinical setting that contribute to decreased ability to seek and maintain care. CHW also play a critical role in identifying patient's health, social and emotional needs.

**Description of CHW Program at DMC**

The Downstate Medical Center Community Health Worker curriculum consists of 115 hours of basic content modules. The modules are comprised of topics on documentation, patient engagement, communication, developmental behavioral and mental health, home visiting, community resources, the health care system and cultural humility. The certificate program will also require students to complete 120 hours of practicum where they shadow social workers, nurses, care managers, counselors or other health care professionals.  The curriculum will also consist of 75 hours of medical condition-specific modules with an optional care coordination module for 45 hours. Medical condition-specific training focuses on Diabetes, Heart Disease/Stroke, Asthma, and Autism/Developmental Disorders. Accepted participants will begin modules starting October 2017, April 2018, or July 2018.

What Qualities are Important to Being a Community Health Worker

1. Warm, Friendly, Open, Energetic, Empathetic, and Sincere Demeanor
2. Excellent Communication Skills
3. Desire to begin a career in health care
4. Commitment to helping others
5. Experience working in a multi-cultural setting
6. Basic Computer Skills
7. Comfortable with Computers, Tablets or Phones
8. Active Community Involvement
9. Strong Organizational Skills
10. Good Time management Skills

A Plus:

1. Knowledge of basic medical terminology
2. Knowledge of community resources