



*Working together to increase the number of CHWs in KY to improve health care access and positive health outcomes for all rural Kentuckians*

## **What is AKHCAN?**

AKHCAN is a group of experts and stakeholders, joined together by a shared vision of healthier people in Kentucky. The Network utilizes its combined experience, commitment and expertise to support Community Health Worker (CHW) programming.

## **Why CHW Programming?**

It is an effective way to broaden access and enhance quality of healthcare services to individuals facing challenges and barriers. CHWs are key to this programming. They are lay health staff typically living in, and trusted members of, the community they serve. They bridge cultural and linguistic barriers between communities and healthcare systems. Visiting patients in their home, they provide culturally appropriate health information, address social determinants, assist in navigating health and human services systems, advocate for individual and community needs, mobilize social supports and build capacity. By doing so, patients are linked to appropriate care, hospital readmissions are reduced, causes of chronic preventable disease are addressed, changes in personal and health activities are made and ultimately, health disparities are reduced and health outcomes for patients are improved.

## **Why is a network needed?**

Despite evidence demonstrating improved health outcomes for patients and cost saving benefits to providers, utilization of CHWs remains limited. In response, AKHCAN has been working to increase the number CHWs in Appalachian Kentucky; develop consistent, yet regionally relevant, CHW training; explore effectiveness and viability of a Kentucky CHW certification process and support CHW workforce sustainability.

## **Who serves on the Network?**

The Montgomery County Health Department serves as fiscal agent and provides network staffing. In addition, the following entities are represented on the network: CHES Solutions Group, Kentucky Department for Public Health, Sterling Health Solutions, Floyd County Health Department, Ashland-Boyd County Health Department, Three Rivers Public Health Department, Saint Joseph Mt. Sterling Hospital, Saint Claire Regional Medical Center, UK Center of Excellence for Rural Health, Northeast Kentucky Area Health Education Center, Northeast Kentucky Regional Health Information Organization, Kentucky Population Health Institute and Kentucky Homeplace.