

What is the Community Health Worker (CHW) Benefit?

The CHW benefit is when a member is served by a Community Health Worker(s) who is a qualified person that shares the same background or lived experience as the member. The CHW can meet with members in-person or online. CHWs can meet with members either in a one-on-one or group setting. Some services CHWs can offer are:

- Health education
- Navigation services
- Health screenings or assessments
- One-on-one support or advocacy

Please see [DHCS All Plan Letter 22-016](#) for more info on covered and non-covered CHW services.

Who can get the CHW benefit?

Members with a certain condition or who express a specific need can get the CHW benefit. Providers must ensure that a member meets eligibility to receive CHW services. Eligibility criteria includes one or more of the following:

- Diagnosis of 1 or more chronic health (including behavioral health) conditions, or a suspected mental disorder or substance use disorder that has not yet been diagnosed.
- Presence of medical indicators of rising risk of chronic disease (e.g., elevated blood pressure, elevated blood glucose levels, elevated blood lead levels or childhood lead exposure, etc.) that indicate risk but do not yet warrant diagnosis of a chronic condition.
- Any stressful life event presented via the Adverse Childhood Events screening.
- Presence of known risk factors, including domestic or intimate partner violence, tobacco use, excessive alcohol use, and/or drug misuse.
- Results of a Social Determinants of Health screening indicating unmet health-related social needs, such as housing or food insecurity.
- 1 or more visits to a hospital emergency department (ED) within the previous 6 months.
- 1 or more hospital inpatient stays, including stays at a psychiatric facility, within the previous 6 months, or being at risk of institutionalization.
- 1 or more stays at a detox facility within the previous year.
- 2 or more missed medical appointments within the previous 6 months.
- Member expressed need for support in health system navigation or resource coordination services.
- Need for recommended preventive services, including updated immunizations, annual dental visit, and well childcare visits for children.
- The Member has been violently injured because of community violence.
- The Member is at significant risk of experiencing violent injury because of community violence.
- The Member has experienced chronic exposure to community violence

How can I get CHW services for my patients?

A physician or other licensed practitioner must put in a written recommendation to San Francisco Health Plan to request CHW services for a patient. This will be the members' "Recommending Provider". If you would like to submit a CHW recommendation form for your patient, please go to [sfhp.org](https://www.sfhp.org).

If you are a provider that would like to employ or oversee CHWs, you will be a "Supervising Provider". Supervising Providers have other duties overseeing CHWs.

What do Supervising Providers do?

All SFHP network providers that employ or oversee CHWs are Supervising Providers. As a Supervising Provider, you:

- Ensure CHWs meet qualifications
- Provide CHWs direct or indirect oversight
- Ensure CHWs deliver compliant services to members
- Submit billing and claims for CHW services
- Verify with SFHP that CHWs have adequate supervision and training

Supervising Providers must keep record of their CHWs career qualifications and lived experience. Minimum career qualifications include any of the following:

- CHW Certificate
- Violence Prevention Professional Certificate
- At least 2,000 hours in paid or volunteer CHW work within the past 3 years

CHWs must have lived experience that align with the member or population being served. This includes, but is not limited to, experiences such as:

- Incarceration
- Military service
- Pregnancy and birth
- Disability
- Foster system placement
- Homelessness
- Mental health conditions
- Substance use
- Domestic or intimate partner violence
- Abuse or exploitation
- Shared cultural background, language, or sexual orientation

Supervising Providers must keep record of CHW trainings. CHWs must complete a minimum of 6 hours of additional relevant training annually. When providing services, CHWs must keep a record of dates and duration of services that can be accessed by the Supervising Provider upon request. Please see [DHCS All Plan Letter 22-016](#) for more details on billing, claims, and supervision.

How long can members use CHW services?

Members can get CHW services up to 12 units without needing prior authorization. For members who need ongoing CHW services after 12 units, a written care plan must be established by 1 or more licensed providers. The plan of care must not exceed 1 year.

What needs to be included in a plan of care?

- Specify the condition that the service is being ordered for and be relevant to the condition;
- Include a list of other health care professionals providing treatment for the condition or barrier;
- Contain written objectives that specifically address the recipient's condition or barrier affecting their health;
- List the specific services required for meeting the written objectives; and
- Include the frequency and duration of CHW services (not to exceed the Provider's order) to be provided to meet the plan's objectives.

A licensed provider must review a member's plan of care every 6 months. During reviewal, providers can consider amending the plan for continuing CHW services or discontinuing based on if plan objectives have been met.