WeConnect Community Health Worker | HIV/AIDS Peer Navigator

With a focus on the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI) seeks to optimize community health by forging cross-sector partnerships and innovative solutions that improve health and health equity, strengthen public policy, and enhance the environments in which we live, work, learn and play. IPHI has emerged as one of the region’s leading partners working on the integration of public health and primary care and on the development, coordination, and evaluation of community health worker (CHW) initiatives. IPHI currently operates various programs across the region that include over 20 community health workers who are directly supporting people living with HIV/AIDS to participate effectively in medical care. IPHI has a Ryan White Part A grant from the DC Department of Health to expand the network of HIV-focused CHWs working across DC, Maryland, Virginia, and parts of West Virginia. Through this grant, IPHI seeks to train, hire, and support 2 additional CHWs to enhance medical care access for people living with HIV/AIDS, while also providing added psychological support and transportation services for some individuals.

Position Title: Community Health Worker – HIV/AIDS Peer Navigator [full-time or part-time] specialty

Positions Available: 1 full-time (30 hours) and 1 part-time (20 hours). Continued availability of positions is contingent upon funding.

Program Overview: For many individuals living with HIV/AIDS, finding the support one needs to be ready for and able to effectively participate in one’s own medical care can be challenging. Far too many people learn of their HIV diagnosis when they are already becoming ill or delay seeing medical experts after a diagnosis due to any number of reasons, including fear, stigma, denial, lack of information about services, or financial or transportation barriers.

WeConnect is meant to provide personal assistance to individuals who are newly diagnosed with HIV, or who have been HIV-positive for a while and have delayed seeing a physician or have fallen out of medical care. This program will train and support a network of Community Health Workers who can share knowledge and provide direct support to help individuals take full advantage of medical services so they can lead healthy lives. Community Health Workers can provide critical support to their peers because of their personal experiences and their familiarity with the resources that are available.

This program will also include a significant education opportunity for newly hired Community Health Workers. All hired Community Health Workers will benefit from a core 80-hour CHW training at the beginning of the initiative to prepare them for their positions, as well as ongoing continuing education and training to help them succeed in their work.

Program Goals: WeConnect is a program that provides linkage to HIV medical care, retention in care support, psychological support, and medical transportation services for persons living with HIV/AIDS in the Washington DC Regional Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA). This regional effort includes the District of Columbia plus 11 counties and 6 independent municipalities in Northern and Northwest Virginia, five counties in Suburban Maryland, and two counties in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Trained Community Health Workers work through community and medical organizations to support program participants to take full advantage of HIV medical care and essential supportive services to improve their health and quality of life.
Job Summary: Community Health Workers will use their unique position as trained community members to provide trust-based information and education, help clients cope with and overcome fear, walk clients through the often complex healthcare system, and help them strategize to manage the logistics of caring for oneself in the context of a complicated life.

Reports to: Community Health Workers will work with the support and supervision of the Program Manager and supervising staff at their placement agencies.

Primary Responsibilities: The following are primary roles and responsibilities of the Community Health Workers:

- Identify individuals who know they are HIV-positive but are not in HIV medical care by receiving referrals, utilizing organizational information about missed appointments, and conducting outreach at various community organizations and venues;
- Work to build the trust and confidence of clients;
- Provide accurate information to clients about living with HIV, preventing further transmission, the benefits and challenges of HIV care and treatment, and available services and how to access them;
- Provide personalized assistance to clients to help them enroll or re-engage in medical care;
- Together with case managers and clinical staff, support clients throughout the early part of their care so they participate fully, become educated, and can advocate for themselves;
- Help clients to develop confidence about their participation in HIV treatment;
- Work with case managers to assist clients in identifying services to address other aspects of their life that affect their health, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, domestic violence services, housing programs, and education and employment services;
- Co-facilitate support groups and ensure client linkage to psychosocial support;
- Using a handheld device, submit clear and accurate data collection forms for all work performed;
- Comply with all program protocols, including those regarding confidentiality of client information;
- Complete employee orientation and all mandatory program trainings to guarantee appropriate competency in program requirements;
- Participate in all staff and program meetings, site visits with funders, required network events, and mandatory trainings;
- Keep supervisor informed of all problems, challenges and conflicts related to job; and
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Required Qualifications:

- **Commitment**: Passion for the mission of WeConnect, including a strong commitment to working to improve the health and quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- **Knowledge**: Must have demonstrated knowledge of HIV/AIDS and HIV medical care services in Washington DC Regional EMA jurisdictions, along with an interest and ability to expand knowledge through training. Knowledge of regional community resources/services is important. Ability to assess clients for needs related to treatment education, risk reduction and prevention.
- **Experience**: Must demonstrate experience with issues related to HIV care and treatment. Experience with issues that put people at risk for poorer health is also highly helpful, such as homelessness, incarceration, domestic violence, and/or substance abuse.
- **Skills**: Strong communication skills are essential. Demonstrated ability to conduct sensitive, empathetic interviews and conversations that highly respect the dignity and diversity of clients. Ability to engage staff and clients in a supportive and empowering way. Ability to help manage conflict. Ability to maintain client records and information in an accurate, timely and confidential manner. Basic computer skills required.
- **Personal qualities**: Personal qualities including energy, intelligence, diplomacy, sound practical judgment, the ability to work independently during periods of less supervision; the ability to work
effectively in a busy environment; and the interpersonal skills to work effectively in partnership with other program staff and others in the agency. Resourcefulness will be required to assist clients, as well as good judgement and decision making.

**Education Required**
- A high school diploma or GED is required for this position. Exceptions may be granted with otherwise qualified candidates when a commitment to complete a GED within a certain time period is made in conjunction with acceptance of employment.

**Additional Requirements:** Employment is expected to begin August 11, 2014. Candidates must be able to participate in intensive trainings during the month of August. More information will be provided during the interview process.

**Salary and Benefits:** Salary is contingent upon available funding, and is commensurate with experience and qualifications. The starting salary for this full-time position is expected to fall in the range of $28,000 - $32,000 (part-time is approximately $13 - $15.50/hr). The first month of employment will consist of training only and will be compensated at a rate of approximately 20 hours per week. IPHI offers a competitive benefit package with annual leave, health/dental/vision insurance and retirement contributions (403(b)) for full-time employees.

**Job Location:** Community Health Workers will be employed by the Institute for Public Health Innovation ([www.institutephi.org](http://www.institutephi.org)). The position requires the employee to work at community and clinical organizations in the Washington DC Regional EMA. IPHI is located at 1301 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC, 20036.

**Travel:** Regular travel within the area surrounding the CHW’s placement site is required for this position. Placements in more outlying suburban or rural areas may require greater travel.

**How to Apply:** To apply for a WeConnect Community Health Worker position, submit a cover letter and resume via email to hr@institutephi.org. Please put “CHW Application – WeConnect” in the subject line of the email. Applications may also be hand-delivered or mailed to: WeConnect CHW Position Announcement, c/o Institute for Public Health Innovation, 1301 Connecticut Avenue NW, 2nd Floor, Washington DC 20036. All resumes must be received by July 22, 2014.

The Institute for Public Health Innovation values a diverse, respectful, and collaborative work environment. We establish and maintain trustful relationships with all staff, contractors, funders, partners, and communities. We believe that hard work, a focus on quality, and a passion for the public’s health are required to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. IPHI looks to all staff and contractors to contribute to the effective implementation of programmatic activities.