



# Health Advisors' work to Improve How Community prove Health Literacy and overcome Disparities



**Background** El Rio Community Health Center has been serving Tucson since 1970, Number of Enrolled Patients: 74 000 Number of Medical /Dental Visits Annually : 289,000 Number of Sites: 17 Patient Profile: Primarily Latino and American Indian 56% Live at or below the Poverty level .

## Historical Perspective of Patient Advocacy and Community Health Advisors at El Rio

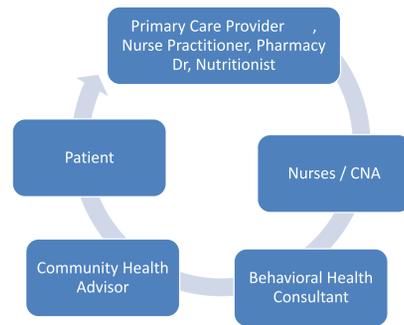
El Rio has a unique legacy that has created the strong foundation for the Community Health Advisor Model. The Clinic was founded in 1970 and by meeting with the neighborhoods of the are we were able to find out what the people needed in the barrios. One of the needs was health services. Julia Soto was the original Patient Advocate and she describes the role and approach . In addition to health-related problems, she helps El Rio patients find solutions to often more pressing issues, such as getting food or clothing, Julia Soto Explains "I really believe every agency needs a safe haven where people feel comfortable telling you what their needs are." We continue using the (confianza) "trust" to date as one of the basic skills, the skill of effective interviewing is described by Ray Valle in the " Mestizo Interviewer". "The methodology of the interviewer must allow him therefore, to pass from the formal level of "hablemos" (speaking to) to the personal level of platicuemos (transacting), That is if he or she expects to open up on themes at the heart of the mestizo culture. As confianza or trust is established the relationship with the Community Health Advisor ( Promotora) begins. According to the National Community Health Advisor Study: Community Health Advisors (CHA's) help individuals and groups take control over their health and their lives. They promote healthy living by educating people in the area of preventing diseases and injury and by helping community residents understand and access formal health and human service systems. CHA's are able to achieve these results because they have specialized training and share experience, language or culture of the communities the serve."

## Current Program

The role of Patient Advocate transitioned to the Community Health Advisor model and created an opportunity to bring the work both to the community and the clinic by fostering the skills and competencies that are essential to assist both in navigating the health care system with the support needed for patients to be able to access care , prevent diseases, facilitate learning, and help the low health literacy patients and also encourage behavior change.

Community Health Advisors are located at each Clinic integrated with the Medical Home team.

## Medical Home Model



## Community Health Advisor Model



### Competencies

- Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Knowledge Base
- Service Coordination
- Advocacy Skills
- Teaching Skills
- Organizational Skills

### Health Literacy

### Education

- Materials that are Low Health Literacy Friendly
- Skills Development
- Access to Healthcare

### Support

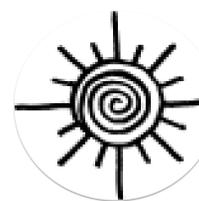
- Networks
- Collaborations

### Community

- Support
- Addresses Issues of Community Concern

### Program

- Community and Clinic Based
- Flexible
- Build on existing Skills
- Fun
- Advocacy
- Sustainable



### Competencies

- Forms good relationship and trust with community
- Desire to Help Community
- Problem solving with Health Literacy in mind
- Empathy
- Persistence



### Methods

- Adult Experiential Learning
- Motivational Interviewing
- Brief Intervention 5 A's Ask/Aware, Advise, Assist, Arrange.

## How Community Health Advisors' Improve Health Literacy

### Core Roles:

- Providing culturally appropriate and accessible health education and methods information, using popular education :
- Assuring that people get the services they need:
- Cultural Mediation between communities and the El Rio Healthcare System.
- Providing informal counseling and social support:
- Advocating for individuals and communities within the health and social service systems;
- Providing direct services, administering health screening tests:
- Building individual and community capacity.

## Working as Cultural Mediators;

El Rio Community Health Advisors are skilled to work as cultural mediators by forming part of the health care team and working closely with the medical and nursing staff and the patient we are able to interpret the cultural and social circumstances . Cultural mediation often helps bridge the gap created by language differences, we are also able to help in fostering trust.

The Community Health Advisors work is based on the principles of the common cultural characteristics for Hispanics. These include family, respeto or respect, personalismo, and confianza.

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