

Assessing Community Health Workers perceptions of their participation in COVID-19 related projects implemented throughout South Texas and their alignment to the Dimensions of Community Capacity

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Title of Abstract: Assessing Community Health Workers perceptions of their participation in COVID-19 related projects implemented throughout South Texas and their alignment to the Dimensions of Community Capacity

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Background: During the COVID-19 pandemic, Community Health Workers (CHWs) have been vital in helping to mitigate health disparities as they have helped serve as a bridge for communities and needed resources. In addition, they have been vital in improving health as they help build community capacity through their outreach, community education, and advocacy. Thus, the purpose of this project was to assess CHW's perceptions of their participation in COVID-19 related projects implemented by the South Texas AHEC Program, throughout South Texas, and their alignment to Goodman et al.'s Dimensions of Community Capacity.

Methods: Using qualitative description, five individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with CHWs in either English or Spanish based on the participant's preference. The questions in the interview guide were created based on the Dimensions of Community Capacity and then qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data. Data were then categorized based on their alignment with the Dimensions of Community Capacity.

Results: In this project, CHW's perceptions aligned well to the following Dimensions of Community Capacity: 1) Social and Interorganizational Networks, 2) Community Values, 3) Community History, 4) Community Power, 5) Leadership, 6) Resources, and 7) Sense of Community.

Conclusions: These findings highlight the importance of capturing CHWs perceptions when working with CHWs on public health projects. Moreover, their perceptions of the COVID-19 projects implemented across South Texas provide examples of how their work aligned with seven dimensions that are essential to community capacity building.