



Enhancing the Social Safety Net for Everyone

Intermountain Funds Community Health Workers

Funding Community Health Workers (CHW) Helps Intermountain Patients

- Protecting the health of a community is the bottom line for community health. Everyone matters, and the safety net infrastructure is better with Intermountain's involvement.
- Community Health Workers (CHW) are boots on the ground. CHWs reach out proactively to vulnerable people and populations; This outreach can keep COVID-19 and other transmittable diseases from spreading.
- To date, 1,290 of Intermountain's patients have been connected to CHWs. The greatest needs include support for food, rent or mortgage, and utility payments. Utah provides this support with state discretionary funds.

Most COVID-19 cases are minor. Sometimes, COVID-19 cases are more serious, and a COVID-19 diagnosis means a loss of income, stress about rent, groceries, and utilities, or a social stigma for you and your family. One domino wobbles, then falls, leading to a domino-effect chain reaction that's difficult to stop on your own. The job of Community Health Workers (CHW) is to stop the dominos from falling.

"His name is Amir, and, well, he just needed help," said Leslie Salamanca Sotelo, a Community Health Worker with the Association for Utah Community Health. "Amir speaks Arabic, so my first task was to find a translator who could help him understand what was happening, who I was, and how we were going to help him through his COVID diagnosis."

*To protect the individual, the name has been changed.



During the COVID pandemic, community health workers have been using their skills, talents, and connections to bridge people and the outside world when they're in quarantine or isolation.

"Some people need access to groceries or assistance with utilities while they can't work. We visit with them, get to know their immediate needs, and provide the relief that allows them to focus on healing," says Leslie.

Funded in part by Intermountain, Community Health Workers work with people to get them what they need by bridging people with local services. From ensuring internet access to stay connected with school, arranging food deliveries to help maintain nutrition and encourage isolation or quarantine, or supplementing electricity payments to help keep the lights on and heat flowing, Community Health Workers keep everyone safe by limiting the spread of COVID and other transmittable diseases.

Community health is part of Intermountain's mission of helping people live the healthiest lives possible.

"Amir needed support for a couple of weeks. When his symptoms subsided, he went back to work," Leslie said. A slow smile started to grow on her face, "And I dialed the next number on my list. Helping people really is the best job."



If you would like to learn more about this program, contact Lisa Nichols at lisa.nichols@imail.org. We'll get through this, together.

