

April 30, 2019

In this edition of our newsletter, we hear from Robert Yates about the critical link between public financing and community health worker programs and talk about what the campaign will be doing at the upcoming World Health Assembly, our presentation at the CORE Group Global Health Practitioner Conference, and our joint statement presented at the consultation meeting at the Universal Health Coverage UN High Level Multi-Stakeholder Meeting.

Welcome New Members

Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, Management Sciences for Health, Global Health Council, Crown Agents, Possible Health, Primary Care International, Good Health Community Programme, PAI, AMEN-Kenya, Reproductive Health Network Kenya, Save the Children, WACI Health, People's Health Movement, Peer to Peer Uganda, Youth Advocacy Foundation Uganda, Uganda Albinism Association, Family Rescue Mission, White Ribbon Alliance Uganda, Good for the Hungry Uganda, Partners in Population and Development, Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy, Amref Uganda, North Star Alliance Uganda, Global Coalition of Women against AIDS in Uganda, Uganda Youth and Adolescents Health Forum, Uganda Youth Coalition, Reproductive Health Uganda, Salud para Todos Argentina, Todos Frente al Chagas.

Public Financing the Key to Successful Community Health Worker Programs

by Robert Yates



The world is uniting behind the goal of universal health coverage (UHC) where everybody receives the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. This can only be achieved in a predominantly publicly financed health system where healthy and wealthy people subsidize services for the sick and poor. But when public finances are constrained (which they are everywhere!) it is vital that countries use their health funds efficiently and equitably. This is what the World Health Organization refers to as getting more health for the money.

Many countries are now recognizing that one of the best strategies to achieve this objective is to scale up coverage of services provided by trained community health workers (CHWs). In particular, CHWs are proving to be a very efficient way to provide primary health care services, which represent some of the best buys that governments can make in improving the health of their people.

In increasing the role of CHWs, it is vital to remain faithful to the principles of UHC and ensure that everyone can receive their vital services. Nobody should be excluded. This means that their services must be provided free of charge with no user fees. In this case it is essential that CHWs are paid from public financing sources and they should have opportunities to undertake further training to pursue other career opportunities. As with other health systems reforms, public financing is the key to successful CHW programs.

Robert Yates, an internationally recognized expert on UHC and progressive health financing, expressed his support for the Communities at the Heart of UHC Campaign. At Chatham House he is project director of the UHC Policy Forum.

Focusing on Women at the World Health Assembly

On the sidelines of the upcoming World Health Assembly (WHA) in May, Communities at the Heart of UHC will host a panel discussion, "[How Communities Can Deliver UHC for Women and Adolescents](#)," with Pathfinder International and the What to Expect Project.

The panel discussion will focus on how countries, implementing partners, the private sector, multilateral organizations and civil society can, and should, work together to fulfill the commitment of quality primary health care via CHWs that meets the needs of women and adolescents to fulfill the promise of health for all.

While countries are making valiant commitments to UHC and primary health care, gaps persist, and the poor and hard-to-reach suffer disproportionately. This is unacceptable if we are to make good on our promise of equity-driven UHC. However, there is a solution. Supported, properly trained and digitally empowered CHWs can ensure all women and adolescents receive the quality, essential health care and services they deserve and support communities to thrive.

CHWs serve as critical and trusted local resources linking the community—particularly women and families—to the larger primary health care system. When properly supported and integrated into the larger health system, CHWs have improved maternal and child health service delivery for vulnerable groups all over the world. Community-based primary health care services ensure healthy pregnancies and enhance the survival and wellbeing of adolescents, women and newborns.

Recommendations from the webcast panel will be shared with Member States and Permanent Missions in New York City in preparation for the UN High-Level Meeting on UHC in September 2019.

Financing Sustainable Health for All

Also at WHA, the Center for Global Health and Diplomacy, Communities at the Heart of UHC and the What to Expect Project will host an informal, interactive cocktail and networking reception on the role of CHWs and mechanisms to finance sustainable health systems in low- and middle-income countries.

"[Financing Sustainable Community Health for All: The Importance of Women Leaders](#)" will join ministers of health, development agency representatives, private investors and civil society to discuss how community health programs are a cost-effective solution for increasing access to health care by extending primary care services to rural and vulnerable populations. Participants will also discuss how engaging and empowering female CHWs has transformed their communities by increasing productivity, health, security, education and general well-being.



Amref photo

Also on the agenda is how to overcome the large financing gap for community health, which impedes the sustainability of such efforts. Speakers will cover topics such as domestic resource mobilization and developing strategic partnerships that involve investors, development agencies and governments to create blended financing vehicles to enable opportunities for scale and reliability.

A Thank You to our Members and Supporters

Communities at the Heart of UHC would like to thank everyone who filled out the survey that we distributed to gather your thoughts and insights on an important advocacy piece of our campaign. On April 29th, the campaign presented its joint statement at the consultation meeting at the UHC UN High Level Multi-Stakeholder Meeting. This statement will be the basis of the key asks for Member States represented at the High-Level Meeting on UHC. The messages we put forward will be integral in generating high-level political will and commitment for including and prioritizing quality community health programs as part of national and global UHC strategies.

Campaign Presents at CORE Group Global Conference

On Tuesday, May 7, Communities at the Heart of UHC will host "Better Together: Advocacy and Partnerships to Strengthen Community Health" at the [CORE Group Global Health Practitioner Conference 2019](#). The campaign will share the importance of effective advocacy and its role in sharing practices and influencing policy commitments to ensure community health programs are included in national health strategies aimed to increase access and provide services for all, including the hardest to reach.

The conference will focus on Partnerships and Innovations for Community Health and aims to provide participants with tools to:

- Examine the successful elements that contribute to meaningful partnerships for results at the community, national, regional and global levels;
- Share innovative health models that can be scaled; determine how as a community we can address gaps in scaling up known evidence-based models; and
- Catalyze plans for consortium building, technical capacity-building and strategic focus for improved community health, in a cross-sectoral manner.

Speakers for the Better Together session include:

Lizah Masis, Financing Alliance for Health
Robert Newman, Aspen Management Partnership for Health
Mesfin Teklu Tessema, International Rescue Committee
Crystal Lander, Living Goods

[Join the campaign and share with others!](#)

About Us

We are a coalition of six organizations—Amref Health Africa, Aspen Management Partnership for Health, Financing Alliance for Health, the International Rescue Committee, Last Mile Health and Living Goods—leading this effort but working with many other organizations to elevate the visibility of community health within the UHC space. We are a part of the larger movement of key organizations, including UHC2030, donors and country leaders working to increase the dialogue on community health programs globally and advocate for funding through domestic resources and foreign assistance.