

## PROMOTORAS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS



### How the Promotores Model Facilitates Healthy Communities

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## International Origins of the Promotores Model



Source: US/Mexico Border Health Association

## Russia

- In 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia, “Lay People” or outreach workers called *feldshers* took a one-year training to learn to care for civilians and people in the military.



Source: US/Mexico Border Health Association

## China

- In China in the 1960s, farm workers were trained as “barefoot doctors” to provide health care in rural communities. About 20% of these health workers later entered medical school.



Source: US/Mexico Border Health Association

## Latin America

Heightened political activism in the 1960s and 1970s increased the number of Promotores trained by popular organizations and church groups throughout Latin America.



Source: US/Mexico Border Health Association

## United States

- The first formal community health worker programs in the United States were established in 1950-1960 as a strategy to deliver accessible and appropriate health resources to communities not being served by the traditional medical system.



Source: US/Mexico Border Health Association



## The Health Promotores Model

The Alma Ata Declaration, signed at the World Health Organization (WHO) conference in 1978, called for:

- Local community participation in determining health care priorities.
- Increased emphasis on primary health care and preventative medicine.
- Linkages between medicine, trade, economics, industry, rural politics, and other political and social arenas.

## Who are Promotores and Community Health Workers?

Promotores are community members who act as natural helpers and liaisons to their neighbors and local neighborhoods; they may or may not be affiliated with community institutions.

## Promotores are Natural “Boundary Spanners”...

“...sought after to provide advice, support, and tangible help.” They offer *servicio de corazón* (heartfelt service) and culturally relevant health prevention education and information to both native-born and immigrant communities.



Source: US-Mexico Border Health Association

## Social change begins with....



## Porque influye a ....

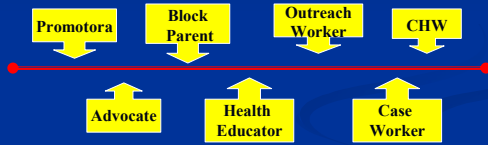


## Promotores Programs

- Promotora and Community Health Worker programs flourish throughout California, particularly in metropolitan areas.
  - Mental health,
  - HIV/AIDS,
  - Diabetes and chronic disease prevention,
  - Cancer,
  - Nutrition and physical activity
  - Oral health, and more.



## Promotores are...



They may have diverse roles and functions.



## Diverse Promotora and CHW Characteristics

Promotora	CHW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community-based</li> <li>Informal Assistance</li> <li>Volunteer &amp; Part-Time</li> <li>Little recognition</li> <li>Person-to-person interaction</li> <li>Live in community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional-based</li> <li>Formal Assistance</li> <li>Employed Part-/Full-Time</li> <li>Formal Recognition</li> <li>Authority interaction</li> <li>May reside outside community</li> </ul>

Source: Community-Workers: Who Are They and What Do They Do? 1996 and VyC focus group data

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## Spectrum of Methodology

Popular Education Model	Medical Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated/ecological approach to health issues</li> <li>Learning through people's experience and stories; people are active learners</li> <li>Curricula recognize and integrate cultural values</li> <li>Transfer of information integrates diverse learning orientations</li> <li>Community-driven curriculum</li> <li>Community engagement to identify solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illness/individual/symptom/behavior focus of health</li> <li>"Teaching" and knowledge attainment; passive learning methods</li> <li>Standardized curricula, centered on white middle class values</li> <li>Transfer of information is centered on white, middle class learning orientations</li> <li>Agency-driven curriculum</li> <li>Experts define and drive solutions/programs</li> </ul>

Visión y Compromiso, 2003

## Research Supports the Work of P/CHWs

### Role of Promotoras & CHWs:

- Facilitate access to services
- Strengthen social support networks
- Identify community solutions
- Reflect community strengths and knowledge
- Remain after the money is gone

### Programs that Integrate Promotores Show:

- Improved health care access
- Increased prenatal care access
- Improved pregnancy and birth outcomes
- Improved client health status
- Increased health and screening behaviors
- Reduced health care costs

(Brownstein and Rosenthal, 1998)

## Promotoras and Community Health Workers Network

*Hacia una Vida Digna y Sana*

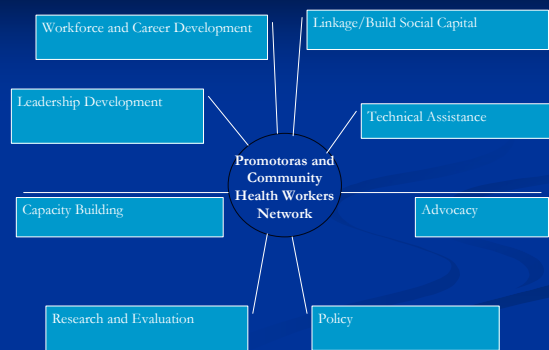
- Established in 2001 by Visión y Compromiso, the Network is now active in 11 regions and includes over 4,000 Promotoras and CHWs.
- Network priorities are defined locally and may differ by region.
- Regional *Comités* (RCs) are the vehicle for local leadership development.
- RCs organize quarterly forums, trainings, health fairs and family events.

## Network Regions in California



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## Core Activities of the Promotoras and CHWs Network



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## LA RED DE PROMOTORAS Y TRABAJADORES COMUNITARIOS



### For additional Information:

Maria Lemus  
Executive Director  
[mhol67174@aol.com](mailto:mhol67174@aol.com)  
510.303.3444

Melinda Cordero  
Associate Director  
[promotorasinCA@aol.com](mailto:promotorasinCA@aol.com)  
626.864.6117

## "Toward a Dignified and Healthy Life"