NCDHHS Selects Vendors to Supervise 250+ New Community Health Workers in 50 Counties with COVID-19 Hot Spots

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) today announced its selection of seven vendors to hire and manage over 250 Community Health Workers, who will be deployed in 50 targeted counties to connect North Carolinians affected by COVID-19 with needed services and support.

"Community Health Workers will bolster our statewide COVID-19 response and help North Carolinians navigate the complex impacts of this pandemic," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D.

The teams of Community Health Workers will connect North Carolinians affected by COVID-19 with medical and social support, including diagnostic testing, primary care, case management, nutrition assistance and behavioral health services. NCDHHS has selected the following vendor organizations to recruit, train and manage Community Health Workers in areas with high COVID-19-related needs:

- <u>Curamericas Global</u> (based in Raleigh; serving Buncombe, Henderson, Wilkes, Surry, Forsyth, Davie, Gaston, Davidson, Guilford, Randolph, Alamance, Durham, Orange, Wake, Johnston, Chatham, Lee, Harnett, Granville, Vance, Warren, Wayne, Pitt, Franklin, Craven and Onslow counties)
- <u>Kepro</u> (serving Mecklenburg, Union, Rowan, Gaston, Cabarrus, Stanly and Montgomery counties)
- One to One with Youth (based in Goldsboro; serving Wilson, Johnston, Duplin, Sampson, Greene, Wayne, and Lenoir counties)
- <u>Vidant Health</u> (based in Greenville; serving Halifax, Northampton, Hertford, Bertie, Edgecombe, Beaufort, Duplin, Pitt, Dare and Chowan counties)
- Mount Calvary Center for Leadership Development (Based in Burgaw; serving Robeson, Bladen, Columbus, Duplin, Sampson, and Pender counties)
- Catawba County Public Health (Based in Hickory; serving Catawba County)
- <u>Southeastern Healthcare NC</u> (Based in Raleigh; serving Orange, Wake, and Johnston counties)

Residents across 50 counties will receive services, with some counties receiving support from multiple vendors. These vendors, a limited number of subcontractors and the Community Health Workers they employ will work in coordination with local health departments and COVID-19 community contact tracers to identify and assist individuals who need help accessing medical or

social services, finding a safe location to isolate, or connecting with other COVID-19-related assistance.

The selected vendors will equip all Community Health Workers with personal protective equipment, including face coverings. Vendors will also provide Community Health Workers with tablets and mobile hotspots to leverage NCCARE360, the nation's first statewide coordinated care technology platform, which is now operational across the state. NCCARE360 unites individuals with traditional health care settings and organizations that address non-medical drivers of health, such as food, housing, transportation, employment and interpersonal safety.

Community Health Workers are most successful when they can deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate services. During the contractor selection process, NCDHHS prioritized vendors' ability to ensure cultural and linguistic diversity throughout the initiative's governance, leadership and workforce. If Community Health Workers are unable to meet an individual's linguistic needs in person, they will use strategies including interpreter services, telephonic interpretation or video remote interpreting.

The NCDHHS-funded COVID-19 Community Health Worker initiative will run through December, with the possibility of renewal. Success criteria for vendors will include the number of clients assisted with COVID-19-related services and supports, the number of referrals made and the referrals in which individuals are connected to resources.