

Farmworker Outreach and COVID-19

Kelly Volkmann, Health Navigation Services Manager
Ulisses Fraile-Martinez, Farmworker Outreach CHW
Community Health Centers of Benton & Linn Counties
Benton County Health Services



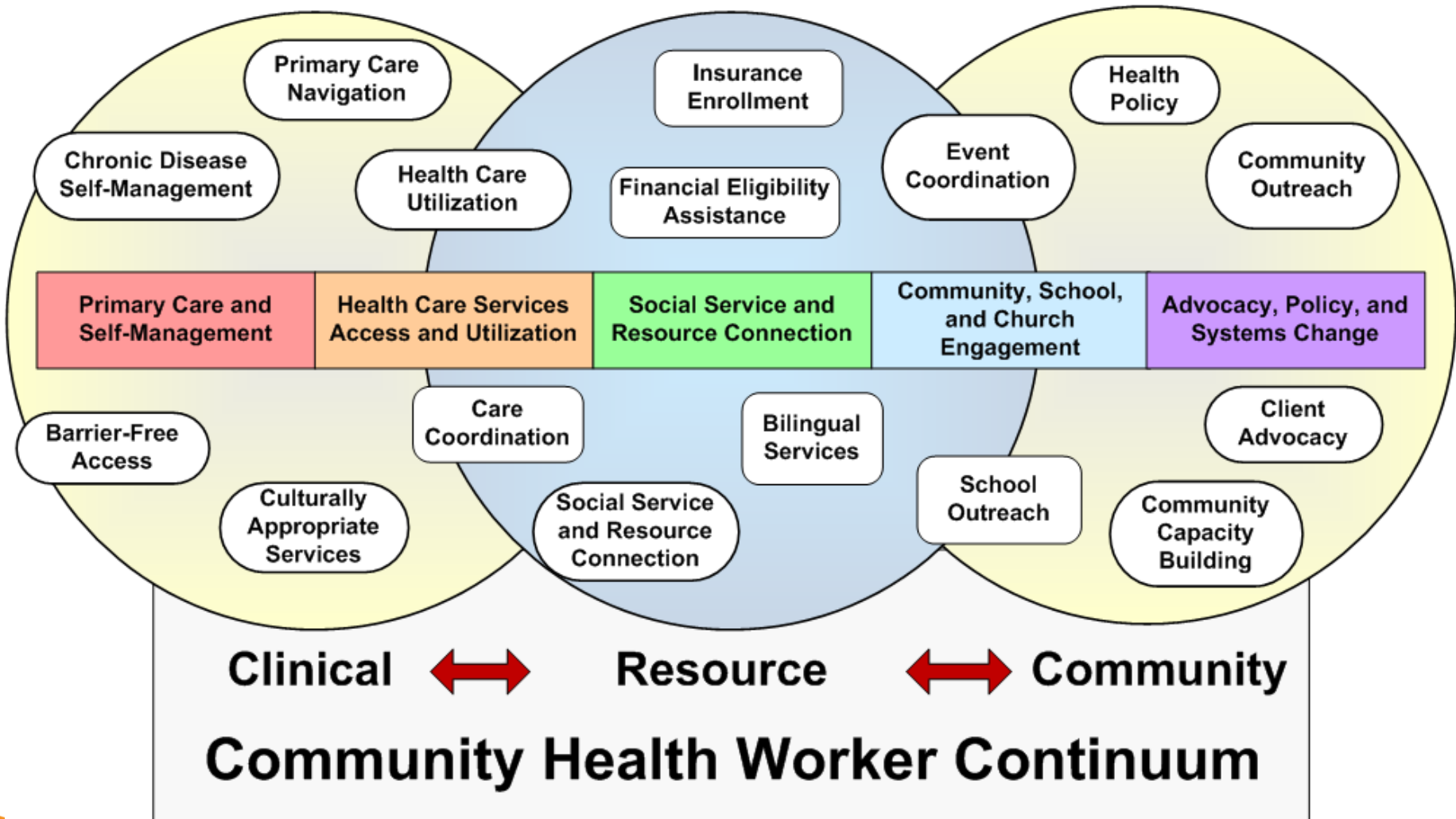
Today's Objectives

- Discuss outreach strategies for reaching migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Share how working with community partner agencies can increase our outreach efforts
- Share challenges and strategies for outreach to this vulnerable population

Community Health Centers of Benton & Linn Counties (CHC)

- Benton and Linn counties in Oregon
- The only Community Health Center in the two counties
- Six primary care clinic sites and one dental clinic
- 28 Community Health Workers in the role of “Health Navigators” (HNs)
 - 3 “teamlets”
 - 2 supervisors
 - 1 manager





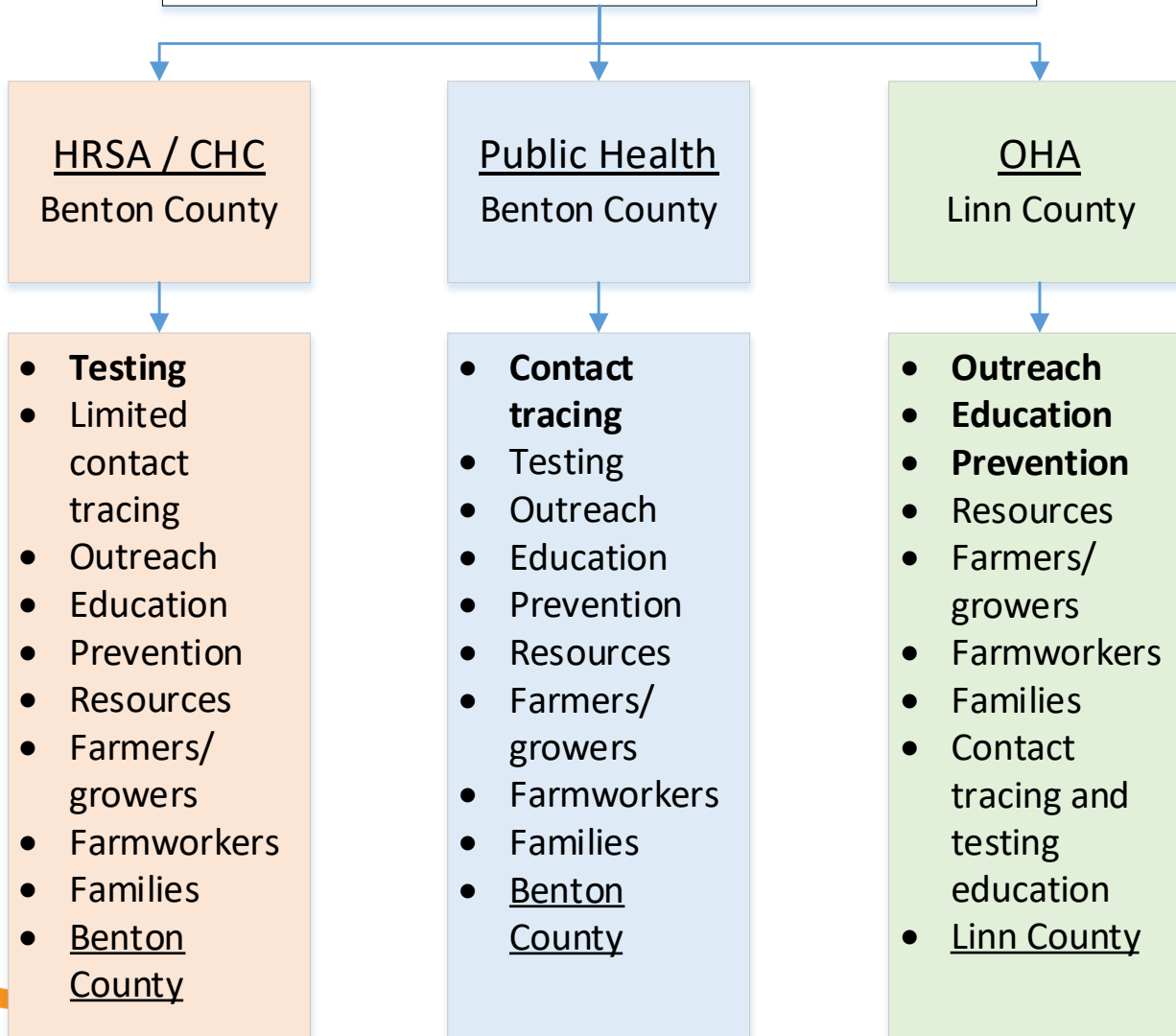
Farmworkers are a high-risk population

- Close living situations
 - May have multiple individuals/families in one home
- Multiple-individual transportation
 - May be carpooling with multiple people
- May not get relevant information in a language or form they can read or understand
- May be left “out-of-the-loop” during emergency messaging and preparedness

Farmworker outreach and testing

- CHC's Health Navigation received funding from 3 different sources for COVID-19 Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker (MSAW) outreach in Benton and Linn Counties
- This is an 11-year dream come true
 - Possibly the only good thing to come out of COVID...

Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker COVID-19 Outreach



New focus for outreach

- First time we had dedicated funding for MSAW outreach
 - Able to hire 3 new CHWs and move one CHW over to do this new work
- Hiring constraints
 - Bilingual, bicultural CHWs from the Linn-Benton area
 - 1 year of funding
 - Willing to work in a “limited duration” position with no guarantee of future funding

Needed to move quickly

- Short timeline – grant deadlines, COVID urgency
- New outreach staff received less training than normal
- Dropped them into the “deep end of the pool”



Grant “deliverables”

- Numbers of:
 - Farms talked to
 - MSAWs and family members talked to
 - Tests given
 - Referrals given (number and what kind)
 - PPE distributed
 - Educational material distributed



Outreach “framework”

- Show up in person
- Be friendly
- Active engagement
 - Don’t wait for people to come to you
- Bring meaningful SWAG!
- Have low expectations for the first XX visits
 - Don’t get frustrated if slow response
 - People have to see you repeatedly before they will trust you



Relationships are key

- This is the first step to building trust
- They take time and patience to build
- You have to be consistent and trustworthy
 - Under-promise and over-deliver!
- CHWs are key to developing relationships with community members
 - Best if seen as being from the community itself

Face-to-face outreach

- Although difficult during COVID, it was critical for outreach team to visit the farms *in person*
- Emails and phone calls often unanswered
- Nothing like showing up every week or two with a load of PPE...and asking about education opportunities for their workers!

Community partnerships

- Local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) serving the community you want to reach
 - You don't need to know everyone...you just need to work with the folks who DO!
- Partner with their staff to meet their clients, attend events...
- Work with churches, shelters, food pantries, schools...?

Casa Latinos Unidos

- Worked with them to plan and implement 3 drive-through testing events in Benton and Linn counties
 - 4 more planned for Feb and March
- Close collaboration means more accomplished in less time

Motto for Collaboration

“It is amazing what we can accomplish if we do not care who gets the credit.”

(paraphrase...Harry S. Truman)

Question for you:

What are some of the CBOs you have worked with to increase your outreach to the MSAW population in your area, and how did you collaborate?

You can respond in the chat box or “raise your hand”

Tools of the trade

- Storage boxes:
 - Educational brochures, handouts
 - PPE: masks, gloves, gowns
 - Pens, clipboards, hand sanitizer, wipes

- Canopies, tables, chairs

- Computers, cords,
“jetpacks”

- Wagons and carts to

carry it all... And Coffee...lots and lots of
coffee...



How management can support outreach workers

- Provide any supplies needed, including mobile computer equipment, multiples of supplies...
- Give team “permission” to make multiple visits to same place without a measurable “output” each time
 - Knowing that the work will pay off as relationships are built
- Track data and bring that to executive management – they need to know the great work your team is doing!

2020 Data

Testing events	11
Tests done	490
Masks given	10,539
Sanitizer given	512
Number of contacts with Farms	455
Number of farmworkers we've had contact with	900
Number of family members we've had contact with	248

Challenges and Strategies

- Trying to build relationships with farmers when you work for the county
 - Wearing county ID in an inconspicuous place (pant pocket instead of shirt front)
 - Emphasizing that we were coming from the “Community Health Centers”
 - Bringing PPE each time so that we were a welcome sight

Challenges and Strategies

- Unfriendly – even hostile – reception from some of the farms
- Farmers not allowing team to provide COVID education to their workers
 - Being polite and friendly in the face of rudeness – not taking it personally
 - Looking for alternate ways to reach the farmworkers through the community
 - Local stores, faith institutions, etc

Challenges and Strategies

- Some growers kept the PPE that was supposed to be given to their workers
 - Trying to communicate the importance of getting the PPE to the workers themselves
 - Asking the grower if the team could assist them by delivering the PPE to the workers at their work sites

Question for you:

What are some of the challenges you have faced, and strategies you have used, in your MSAW outreach?

You can respond in the chat box or “raise your hand”

Success story from the field



Your turn...

- Questions?
- Outreach tips and tricks to share?
- Stories from the field to inspire us?

We want to learn from YOU!

Thank you!

Kelly.volkmann@co.benton.or.us

Ulisses.fraile-Martinez@co.Benton.or.us