

Friends Foundation for the Aging
Returning Grantee Application September 2022
Community Health Worker

1. Has the identified problem changed?

Trinitas Foundation is requesting a \$37,000 grant to support the Community Health Worker position that is part of Trinitas' Readmission Reduction program. The CHW works to alleviate depression and isolation with seniors by visiting patients at home after discharge from the hospital to provide companionship, medication reminders, help with scheduling/bringing patients to doctor appointments and help with food shopping and meal prep. The CHW also acts as a second set of eyes and can help to monitor patient's chronic illness by assisting with taking blood pressure and blood glucose, if applicable, alerting the APN if there is an abnormal reading or if they detect anything of concern with the patient. The grant will fund the full-time salary and benefits of the CHW for one year. Prior grant funding to support this position has been very beneficial to our patients and has helped to improve outcomes and reduce readmissions for our patients so we are asking for continued support for this position. Given the hiring challenges that the healthcare industry is currently facing we are hoping to be able to retain this position through year-end 2023 with grant funding. Trinitas currently has over 450 employee openings and like many hospitals, is challenged with recruiting and retaining staff including nurses and other medical staff and support staff, even with recent market adjustments and wage increases for many positions. Unfortunately, the CHW position is not included in the 2023 operating budget for the department and at this time, the hospital is not in the position to assume the cost of this position. It is also not a lateral position that can be combined with another opening. Thanks to prior year funding from Friends, we expect that remaining grant funds will cover the position through the end of 2022. However without additional grant funding we will have to find alternatives or eliminate the position at that time. However, given the success of the CHW in reducing readmissions and the positive impact on patient recovery, every effort will be made to include the cost of the CHW position in the department's 2024 operating budget.

2. Have your objectives changed?

Our objectives have not changed. The Readmission Reduction program has been operating at Trinitas since 2013. The program provides at home support to recently discharged chronically ill patients at high risk for hospital readmission to ensure their long-term recovery at home and reduce hospital readmission. The CHW provides weekly at-home visits to seniors identified as at risk of social isolation in order to alleviate loneliness and decrease feelings of depression and to provide support and reminders about meals, medications and doctor appointments with the objective to improve patient's at-home recovery and health outcomes and reduce hospital readmission. The CHW also assists in bringing patients to doctor appointments and assists with food shopping, if needed. On average, the CHW has eight patients that they visit and follow up with weekly for about three months each. We expect that about 32 patients will be provided with weekly visits for a period of three months for 12 visits each during the grant-funded period.

3. Will your efforts/actions to impact the problem change? Describe.

The CHW activities and efforts will remain the same with the added role of helping patients to enroll in pharmaceutical medication assistance programs, if available, and/or helping them to get free medication

through our partnership with St. Joseph’s Services or other available resources. The CHW will continue to visit patients to provide companionship, assistance/reminders about medications and follow-up doctor appointments, helping with food shopping and meals and working with the social worker to connect patients to outside programs for sustained socialization. Assistance with doctor appointments and medication reminders helps to ensure compliance with post-discharge protocols and improve patient outcomes and lower readmissions since non-compliance with medications and doctor appointments is associated with an increased risk for readmission within 30 days of discharge. The CHW also helps participants monitor their chronic illness by assisting with taking blood pressure and blood glucose, if applicable, and can alert the APN if there is an abnormal reading. All of these efforts work to increase the patient’s recovery at home and lesson the likelihood of being readmitted to the hospital. We will continue to use the PHQ-9 to assess the patient’s level of need and level of depression and will complete the PHQ-9 at the first, mid and final visits, as well as documenting and tracking needs/activities on an ongoing basis using an informal questionnaire/survey.

4. How will you know if the program is successful?

The CHW uses the PHQ-9 Questionnaire, a standardized screening tool used to gauge feelings of depression to assess effectiveness of the program as well as an informal questionnaire to gauge patient needs. Activities and notes on the patient are also logged at each visit. The CHW assists participants in completing the PHQ-9 Questionnaire, at the first, middle and last visit to assess the effectiveness of the program. The CHW also acts as a “second set of eyes” on the patients and alerts the program’s APN if they detect anything of concern. Success will be measured by improvements in PHQ-9 scores over a period of approximately 12 visits by the CHW. A decrease in the score indicates an improvement in feelings of loneliness and depression for the patient. We will also note if there are improvements in medication adherence and fewer missed doctor appointments and meals. We will also track the readmission rate for patients seen by the CHW and for the program overall. The CHW serves about 32 patients annually.

5. Program Budget

Grant funds of \$37,000 will support the full-time salary and benefits of the Community Health Worker position for one year. This represents a 3% increase in salary from last year and is in line with recent hospital, non-medical staff wage increase. Thanks to prior year funding from Friends, we expect that current grant funds will cover the position through the end 2022.

Program Budget

Item	Description	Total Cost
Community Health Worker Salary	1 full-time CHWs: 37.5 hours per week @ \$16 per hour	\$31,200
Benefits for F/T CHW	21% of salary	\$6,552
Grant Request		\$ 37,752