

From the Ground Up: Empowering CHWs in Emergency Preparedness & Resilience

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Competitive Division: Academic

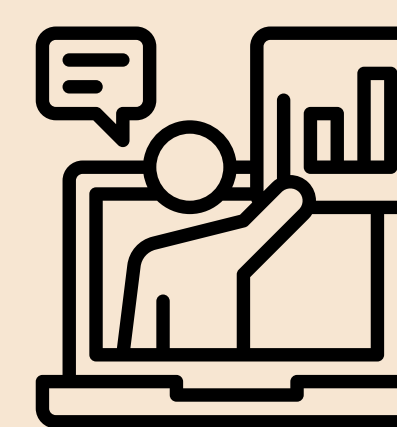
Introduction

Community Health Workers (CHWs) play a crucial role in bridging healthcare gaps within communities¹ but receive limited training on emergency preparedness. Integrating emergency preparedness into CHW training enhances their capacity to prepare their communities and respond effectively during public health crises².

What We Did



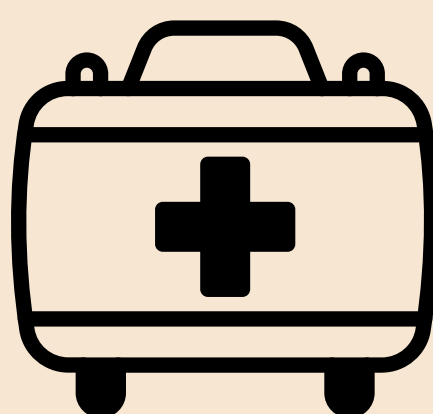
Partnered with the Georgia Department of Public Health and community partners to ensure cultural competency of the training program.



Built customized training modules focused on emergency preparedness, mental health, infectious disease, and opioid topics delivered synchronously online.

Why is it Important?

Emergencies and disasters disproportionately impact vulnerable populations. Equipping CHWs with essential knowledge and skills enhance whole-community resilience and disaster readiness.



Designed, collated, and shipped thirty emergency preparedness kits including 100+ items to program participants.



Filmed and distributed an educational video on the emergency preparedness kits and supplemental resources provided.



What We Found

The program received positive feedback, citing relevance and applicability of training curriculum. Sessions on personal safety, opioid overdose response, and natural hazards were highlighted as especially beneficial for the CHW role.

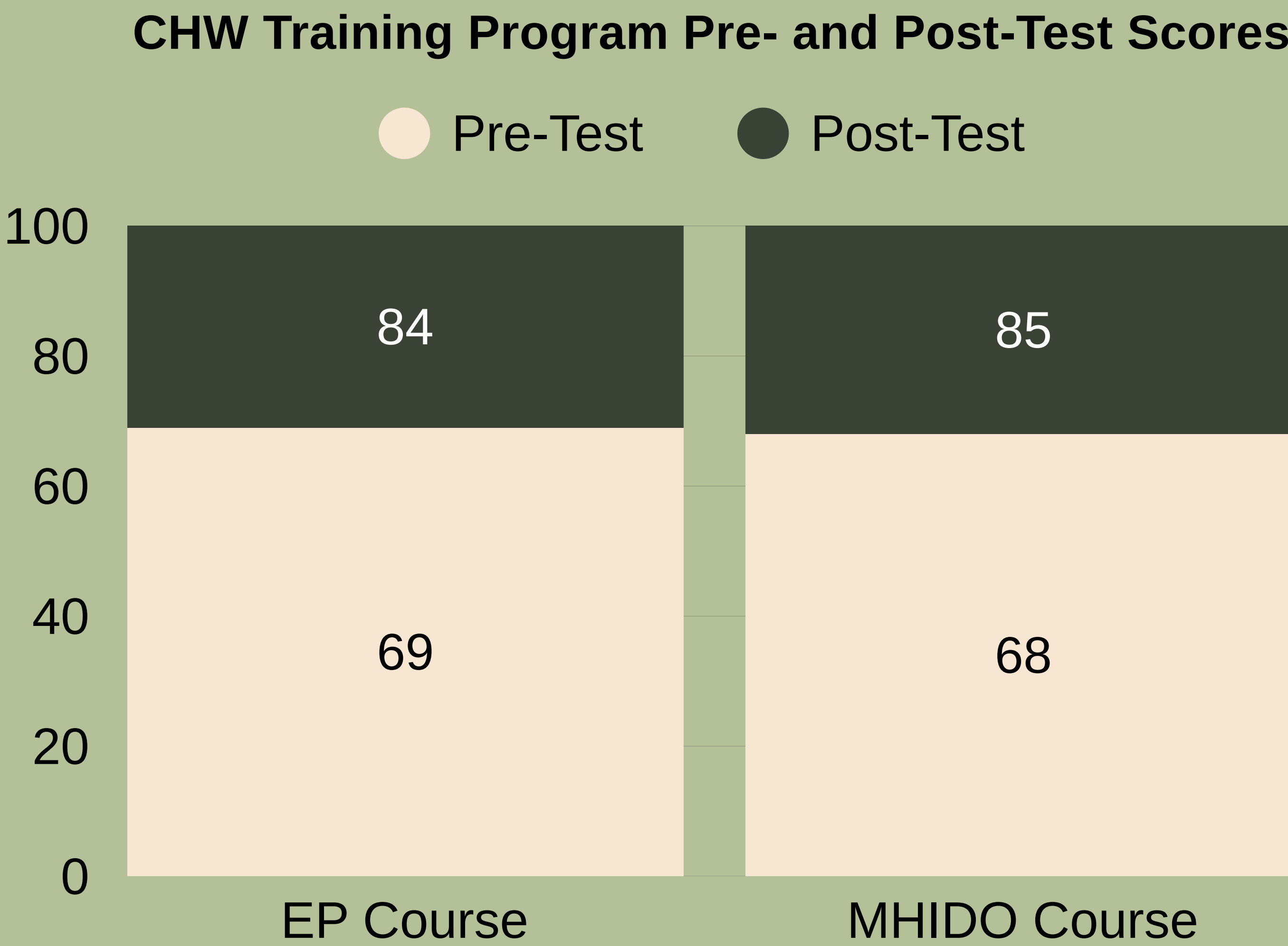
What's Next?

Continued integration of emergency preparedness training into CHW core curriculum is recommended to bolster community resilience and increase CHW utilization³.



What Does the Data Say?

Participants demonstrated an average knowledge gain of **16 points** across the two courses.



1. McCray GG, Haynes B, Proeller A, Ervin C, Williams-Livingston A. Making the case for community health workers in Georgia. J Ga Public Health Assoc. 2020;8(1). doi:10.20429/jgpha.2020.080116
2. Nicholls K, Picou JS, Curtis J, Lowman JA. The utility of community health workers in disaster preparedness, recovery, and resiliency. J Appl Soc Sci. 2015;9(2):191-202. doi:10.1177/1936724415587046
3. Kissinger A, Cordova S, Keller A, Mauldon J, Copan L, Rood CS. Don't change who we are but give us a chance: Confronting the potential of community health worker certification for workforce recognition and exclusion. Arch Public Health. 2022;80(1):61. doi:10.1186/s13690-022-00815-4