



**ORCHWA**  
Oregon Community Health Workers Association

## **Coming Together to Address Coronavirus/COVID-19 and Care For Each Other**

ORCHWA values the power of coming together to care for each other. Unity, community, and sharing are some of ORCHWA's core values because these are central to how CHWs, community-based organizations, and ORCHWA work together toward health equity<sup>1</sup> and social justice<sup>2</sup>. In order to keep each other and our partners safe, the ORCHWA office is closed for at least the next two weeks. The work toward our mission to serve as a unified voice to empower and advocate for CHWs and our communities continues, and ORCHWA staff are working remotely. ORCHWA staff and Board are here to support you in every way we can.

The coronavirus<sup>3</sup> pandemic makes it very clear that injustice and bias<sup>4</sup> are still flaws in the current healthcare and governmental systems. Working together, CHWs can help healthcare, social, and governmental systems identify and address the impacts of settler colonialism<sup>5</sup>, racism<sup>6</sup>, classism<sup>7</sup>, and ableism<sup>8</sup>. CHWs have always worked to address these root causes of injustice. Our challenge is to inspire our partners to think about and deliver health, social, and other services in ways that center the needs of communities that are farthest from justice. As CHWs who are part of a community of support, we can keep this work going together even though we may be feeling frustrated and/or discouraged. Be sure to take care of your 'CHW self' right now!

## **What We Know About this Virus**

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.\*

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after coming into contact with the virus:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

COVID-19 is extra dangerous for people with weak immune systems and other illnesses, and the elderly. Be sure to check the CDC symptoms web page for more information:

\*<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

Right now there is no vaccine for COVID-19. Anybody who has the virus can pass it to other people who they come in contact with. People may be able to pass the virus to other people even if they don't feel sick. People can also get the virus by touching things like doorknobs or countertops if they have come in contact with the virus. Please visit the CDC (Center for Communicable Disease) and WHO (World Health Organization) websites for the most up-to-date information:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

### **What You Can Do To Protect Yourself and Our Communities**

- Stay home if you are sick
  - If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a doctor's office.
  - If you are NOT sick: You do not need to wear a facemask. Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.
- Avoid large groups of people
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow
- Clean things that people touch often like doorknobs, tables, toys, and playgrounds
- Check the CDC and WHO websites for information as it keeps changing
- Remember to take care of **you**:
  - Take breaks to eat and stretch
  - Get plenty of rest
  - Drink water
  - Check in with your body
  - Who can you call for social, emotional, physical, or spiritual support?

### **CHWs and Social Distancing**

- Follow your employer or volunteer agency's social distancing instructions
- When possible, talk with participants by phone or email, texting and/or messenger apps that your supervisor said are okay to use
- If you bring supplies to participants, make plans to place them in safe spaces on porches or doorsteps to avoid direct contact
- Share what you're doing to support participants and your community and see what other CHWs are doing too by using our [CHW Community Support Share](#)

Here are some ideas:

- Start a drive for community members to share hand sanitizer or toilet paper with people who were not able to stock up or can't find supplies.
- Deliver meals and supplies to elders and school-age children

We hope you will find the resources below useful. We will keep sharing more on our listserv as we learn about them. Please stay tuned and keep in touch! Send us any information you find useful during this stressful time so we can share it with the ORCHWA community. We are all teachers and we are all students.

Thank you for your work and dedication to health equity and social justice. In community we are strong.

With you in solidarity,

The ORCHWA staff and Board

### References and Resources

- [COVID-19 Workshop Materials for CHWS from Multnomah County Health Department](#)
- [COVID-19 Information in Different Languages from Multnomah County Health Department](#)
- [Novel Coronavirus Updates and Resources \(COVID-19\) from Oregon Health Authority](#)
- [CHW COVID-19 resources from the National Association of Community Health Workers](#)
- [CHW Survey on COVID-19 from the National Association of Community Health Workers](#)
- [Community, care, and how to show up for others during Covid-19](#)
- [Plain Language Information on COVID-19 by and for people with developmental disabilities](#)
- [Coronavirus resources from the National Healthcare for the Homeless Council](#)
- [The COVID-19 Outbreak in Oregon - Medical Recommendations for Immediate Action](#)
- [Oregon Food Bank Locations](#)
- [Portland area COVID-19 "Request Support" Form](#)
- [Self-care Tips if you become sick with COVID-19 from an activist nurse](#)
- [‘The Cripples Will Save You’: A Critical Coronavirus Message from a Disability Activist](#)
- [Coronavirus: Wisdom from a Social Justice Lens: COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Preparation for People Living with Chronic Illnesses in the United States](#)
- [Pod Mapping for Mutual Aid](#)
- [Petition for a rent freeze in Portland, OR](#)
- [Free Comcast Internet Essentials if you have a kid that qualifies for a free or reduced cost lunch program](#)
- [Where Portland-area families can find free grab-and-go kids meals during school shutdown](#)

Please email [info@orchwa.org](mailto:info@orchwa.org) if you have questions, or if you want to be added to the listserv.

## **Glossary of Terms**

1. Coronavirus/Covid-19: Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 and has not been previously identified in humans.
2. Health equity: Every person has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health no matter what their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, immigration status, or other characteristics are.
3. Social justice: The equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society for every person.
4. Bias: an inclination or preference for people like you, or against people not like you, usually based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, immigration status, or other characteristics or identities.
5. Settler colonialism: The occupation and mis-use of Indigenous land in which [European\*] colonizing powers create permanent or long-term settlement on land already occupied by Native peoples; the process of assuming control of Indigenous territory and systematically and forcibly applying [European] culture and systems of law, government, and religion to Indigenous peoples.
6. Racism: The individual, cultural, and institutional bias and discrimination that systematically oppress people of Black, Indigenous, Immigrant & Refugee, & communities of color.
7. Classism: The institutional, cultural, and individual set of beliefs and discrimination that assigns different value to people based on their income and resources; and an system which creates inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet.
8. Ableism: The individual, cultural, and institutional beliefs and discrimination that oppress and discriminate against people who have mental, emotional and physical disabilities and illness.

\*Colonizers throughout history and around the globe were also Russian, Turkish, American, and Japanese. However, because of our context and history in the United States, when colonization and de-colonization are discussed, usually the “colonizing powers” are assumed to be European.