

SIM Client Experience Surveys
Findings from Northern CHIR Community Connections Interviews

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**SUSAN B. MEISTER
CHILD HEALTH EVALUATION
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MICHIGAN MEDICINE

FINDINGS FROM THE NORTHERN CHIR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS INTERVIEWS

Background

Michigan's State Innovation Model (SIM) aims to bring together community agencies, including health care providers, to better identify and assist residents in addressing social determinants of health (SDOH). Among a range of evaluation activities, describing client experiences with SIM activities was deemed by SIM leadership as an important perspective in understanding the project's impact. As such, SIM leadership provided funding for the University of Michigan's Susan B. Meister Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR) Center to work with Community Health Innovation Regions (CHIRs) to implement client experience surveys.

Planning the Community Connections Interviews

In June 2019, CHEAR was contacted by staff from the Northern CHIR with a request to implement a client experience survey. The survey planning effort included representatives from each of the 3 Hubs. CHEAR led the staff through several key decisions related to the survey process:

Survey Method: Northern CHIR officials agreed that telephone surveys conducted by CHEAR would allow for in-depth responses, while providing clients with confidentiality to give their candid opinions about CHIR staff.

Terminology: Northern CHIR staff reviewed and suggested wording changes to the survey instrument and recruitment materials, emphasizing the term Community Connections.

Survey Focus: Survey questions focused primarily on clients' interactions with their Community Connections coordinator, and whether clients felt that their needs were met.

Target population: Lead staff at each of the three Hubs identified a list of clients who had worked with Community Connections in the past 6 months; this would ensure that feedback would represent current structure and practices. This target population included clients who were still engaged with Community Connections as well as those who had completed their interactions.

Data Sharing Agreement: Northern CHIR officials determined that an additional agreement would be necessary to allow sharing of client information with CHEAR. With the relatively short timeframe for the project, and the inability of the UM compliance office to identify an acceptable agreement format for this project, the CHIR staff decided to adjust the survey process so that client data sharing would not be needed.

Recruitment: The initial recruitment plan was for CHEAR to receive client contact information from each Hub, and then would send recruitment materials (letter, brochure) by mail, with telephone follow-up of clients who did not call in to complete the survey. However, without a data sharing agreement in place, the recruitment process was modified. CHEAR provided each Hub with recruitment brochures (in English and Spanish) and postage; Hub staff then mailed those materials to the 75-100 clients they had identified for the survey. The recruitment materials requested that the clients call in to the CHEAR toll-free

number or contact CHEAR via email to schedule an interview time. Recruitment materials are included at the end of this report.

Gift Cards: CHEAR provided \$20 gift cards for each client who completed interviews, funded from an unrestricted (non-state) account. Gift cards were tracked through the UM system to ensure compliance with standard auditing protocols.

Fielding the Community Connections Interviews

Recruitment materials were sent to the Hubs in October 2019. Two CHEAR staff were trained on conducting the interviews using a standardized interview script; one interviewer is bilingual, to allow for participation of Spanish-speaking clients. CHEAR staff were available to accept incoming calls between 8 am and 7 pm; clients who left messages at other times were contacted within 48 hours.

Clients were asked to recall the name of the coordinator they worked with at Community Connections. Throughout the interview, questions about coordinators were asked about the specific individual named by the client; in cases where the client could not recall their coordinator's name, questions referred to "your Community Connections coordinator".

Interviews were completed with 53 clients between October and December 2019. At the outset of the interview, clients were asked for permission to record the interview, to facilitate accurate recording of responses; all agreed. A CHEAR research assistant reviewed all call recordings to verify accuracy of the responses marked in the software system, and to transcribe client responses to open-ended questions. As such, quotes included in this report represent verbatim statements from clients.

Interview Results

The 53 interviews included 17 clients of the District 10 Health Department Hub, 24 clients of the Grand Traverse Hub, and 12 clients of the Health Department of Northwest Michigan Hub. Participating clients included 36 women and 17 men. Most clients (60%) said they are still working with Community Connections.

Client Needs

Clients described a broad range of needs, and all clients endorsed multiple areas of need:

- 38% Enrollment in MDHHS programs
- 28% Housing
- 28% Health care-related issues
- 25% Transportation
- 21% Food insecurity
- 15% Trouble paying bills
- 8% Employment
- 8% Children's needs
- 2% Legal issues (bankruptcy)
- 26% Other (e.g., personal care, home upkeep)

Client Ratings of Community Connections Coordinators

Clients named 17 different Community Connections coordinators as their primary contact; 3 clients could not remember the name of their coordinator.

Clients rated their experiences working with their coordinator on 8 aspects.

	<i>Definitely Yes %</i>	<i>Mostly Yes %</i>	<i>No %</i>	<i>Don't Know %</i>
Was [coordinator] easy to reach?	79	19	2	0
Did [coordinator] listen to you?	91	9	0	0
Was [coordinator] dependable?	85	13	2	0
Do you feel [coordinator] cared about you?	89	9	2	0
Was [coordinator] honest with you?	79	13	0	8
Were you honest with [coordinator]?	96	4	0	0
Did [coordinator] share your information according to your wishes?	74	4	2	21
Did [coordinator] keep you updated on the status of applications or other efforts to get the help you needed?	77	11	6	6

CHEAR created a composite rating for each interview, using the client ratings for the 8 aspects of interactions with coordinators. Each client rating was scored as follows:

Rating	Points
Definitely yes	+2
Mostly yes	+1
Don't know	0
No	-1

Under this scoring system, 32 out of 53 clients (60%) gave their coordinator a perfect rating.

Only four clients rated their coordinator negatively in some aspect of their experience working together. Most comments pertained to not being able to reach the coordinator.

She only works part-time and if her voicemail was full, I couldn't leave a message. People at the front desk would take messages, but it would be 2 or 3 weeks before I heard back because...she wasn't always in her office. It was kind of hard to get ahold of her.

When I went to her, I waited a month for an appointment.

Nobody ever called me back so I didn't know what was going on.

Client Ratings of Community Connections Coordinators

Clients also rated the helpfulness of Community Connections in five areas:

Process	Definitely Yes %	Mostly Yes %	No %	Didn't need/ Unsure %
Identifying what your needs are	70	15	13	2
Understanding the goal of the service to be provided	79	11	8	2
Making a plan for how your needs might be met	60	19	11	10
Finding other resources you needed	68	15	9	8
Connecting you to services you couldn't get before	66	17	11	6

Additional questions asked clients to describe the nature of the help they received through Community Connections:

- **60%** of clients said their Community Connections coordinator was particularly helpful.
- **70%** of clients said the help they received through Community Connections was different than what they've gotten in the past.
- **94%** of clients would recommend other people work with Community Connections.

In describing their experiences with Community Connections, four common themes emerged.

1: Community Connections offers individualized communication

I would say it's a lot more personal. I don't feel like I'm just a number. She addresses me by my name. She texts me, we don't talk on the phone a whole lot, but we text a lot back and forth. A lot of places don't do that.

Their way that I was able to contact them...by phone, text and e-mail. Really easy to get a hold of her in multiple ways, and that was really nice.

She actually came out to the house to help me which was a great help and she actually explained things here at the kitchen table. She took as much time as I needed.

In the past it's kind of hard to even get a hold of anyone at these other agencies. Playing phone tag or you never even get a phone call back at all. It's more personal and one-on-one with [Coordinator]--someone actually doing her job!

2: Community Connections staff are persistent and dedicated on behalf of clients

The speed in which [Coordinator] submitted all the forms I needed to put in, and checking in and making calls on my behalf, I feel like she made it a big priority. If she said she was going to do something, she did it right away.

They hit the ground running when they took my case and worked with a sense of urgency and that was really cool.

She was much more determined to find help, find funding that other places would have just say "Oh no, there's none available." Helpful in finding things I couldn't find on my own.

I feel that if I didn't have [Coordinator] helping me with these things, I'd still be waiting for a phone call. Things wouldn't have gotten done. She was a lifesaver for me.

I'm always surprised to hear from her because she texts me whenever there is something going on that I might not know about and might be able to take advantage of... [Coordinator] has gone above and beyond with more information that I had even asked about.

It was the fact that I felt like I finally had an advocate, some support. I talked to a lot of people before and I felt like I had no support.

3: Community Connections takes a comprehensive approach to helping clients

Having somebody assigned to your case that doesn't hand it off. It's not compartmentalized. That person stays with you from the very beginning and helps you all the way through. I thought that one-on-one approach was definitely what was needed in my case.

They seemed like they were more willing to help and knowledgeable on what path we had to take to get our services met.

She texts me whenever there is something going on that I might not know about and might be able to take advantage of... [Coordinator] has gone above and beyond with more information that I had even asked about.

If she didn't know the answer to something, she would tell me so, and learn and call me back.

Just having somebody assigned to your case that doesn't hand it off. It's not compartmentalized. That person stays with you from the very beginning and helps you all the way through. I thought that one-on-one approach was definitely what was needed in my case.

4: Community Connections staff are friendly and accepting

I really felt I was dealing with a professional and that she seemed to enjoy what she was doing--she enjoyed helping me.

I've had a lot of people come and go, and a lot of them are nice, but they do their job and that's it. [Coordinator] makes you feel good about asking for help.

She was like a great guidance counselor. She helped me with, probably, some questions she's never heard before. It was like I was talking to a friend.

They didn't make me feel awkward in any way.

She took time to work on these forms to fill them out together. I have a really hard time with a lot of forms. She's the first one that's really started helping me with forms. She broke down the wall for me to ask for help with other people.

Unmet Needs

Most clients felt that Community Connections had met their needs or was in the process of meeting their needs. However, 19% of clients described unmet needs. In some cases, clients were still in the process of identifying and connecting with services. In other cases, client needs involved services with limited availability (e.g., transportation, assistance with household cleaning) or restrictive eligibility criteria.

About one quarter of clients had suggestions for how Community Connections could improve. These suggestions fell into four categories:

- Make people aware of the program
- More options of resources in the community
- Clarify what the program offers
- Expand staffing

Perceived Impact on the Future

The vast majority of clients felt that their experience working with Community Connections would have a positive impact in the future. This included their future ability to get community services, and their ability to support their own health.

After working with Community Connections...	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Unsure</i> %
I know more about what community services are available	83	11	6
I understand more about how to get the services or help I need	87	9	4
I'm confident that in the future, I will be able to get the services or help I need	74	11	15
I am able to do more to support my own health	83	13	4

Limitations

Interviews were completed with 53 clients, which represents a response rate of approximately 20%. Based on client survey efforts in other CHIRs, the response rate would have been roughly three times greater had a data sharing agreement been in place. Additionally, although Spanish-language recruitment materials were produced and a bilingual interviewer available, no Spanish-speaking clients contacted CHEAR for participation.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Community Connection clients described a wide range of needs, many which do not fit in traditional categories. Clients gave high ratings to Community Connections staff for their comprehensive approach, individualized methods of communication, dedication and persistence to getting results, and being friendly and accepting of all clients. Clients feel that Community Connections has helped them be better prepared to get the community services they need and to take care of their own health.

Recruitment Materials

YOUR FEEDBACK NEEDED!

Community Connections has asked the University of Michigan to talk with people like you to help us learn what we're doing well and where we need to improve.



Were your needs met?
What was most helpful?
How can we do better?

For participating in this 15-minute phone interview, you will receive a \$20 gift card!



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Participation is easy!

Our partners at the University of Michigan will conduct your phone interview at your convenience!

Schedule an interview time by:

-calling 734-936-3064

or

- sending an email to

communityfeedback@med.umich.edu

Give your name, call back number and the best day/time to talk.

Your responses will be confidential. Our University of Michigan partners will prepare a summary of feedback, but will not use your name or personal information.

Thank you for helping us improve our service to the Northern Michigan community!

District Health
Department #10 HUB
(Crawford, Kalkaska,
Manistee, Missaukee,
Wexford, Lake, Mason,
Mecosta, Newago, Oceana
Counties)
Fax: 1-231-622-7413
Email: HUB@dhd10.org
Phone: 1-888-217-3904
Ext 3

Grand Traverse Regional
HUB/Benzie-Leelanau District
Health Department
(Benzie, Grand Traverse,
Leelanau Counties)
Fax: 1-231-882-0143
Phone: 1-833-674-2159

Health Department of
Northwest Michigan HUB
(Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet,
Osago Counties)
Fax: 1-231-547-6238
Phone: 1-800-432-4121



[Date]

[client address]

Dear [Client Name]

The Community Connections program has been working to improve the way we offer assistance to people in our community. You are working with [name of care coordinator] at Community Connections.

To gather feedback, we have asked our partners at the University of Michigan to conduct brief confidential phone interviews with people served recently by Community Connections.

The **phone interview takes about 15 minutes**, and it is your choice to take part.

You will receive a **\$20 gift card** 1-3 weeks after the interview, to reimburse you for the phone minutes.

Participating is easy! Just contact our University of Michigan partners to set up a time to do the interview.

- Call 734-936-3064
or
- Email communityfeedback@med.umich.edu

Be sure to provide your name, call-back number, and a good time to call.

Please be honest! Your feedback will help us understand what's working well, and how we can do better in the future.

Sincerely,

[Community Connections contact]



Client Interview Results by Hub

Clients rated their experiences working with their coordinator on 8 aspects:

	<i>Definitely yes</i>	<i>Mostly yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Was [coordinator] easy to reach?	79.2%	18.9%	1.9%	0.0%
District 10	77.8%	16.7%	5.6%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	63.6%	36.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Did [coordinator] listen to you?	90.6%	9.4%	0.0%	0.0%
District 10	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	95.8%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	90.9%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Was [coordinator] dependable?	84.9%	13.2%	1.9%	0.0%
District 10	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%
Do you feel [coordinator] cared about you?	88.7%	9.4%	1.9%	0.0%
District 10	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	72.7%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%
Was [coordinator] honest with you?	79.2%	13.2%	0.0%	7.5%
District 10	77.8%	5.6%	0.0%	16.7%
Grand Traverse	83.3%	12.5%	0.0%	4.2%
Northwest	72.7%	27.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Were you honest with [coordinator]?	96.2%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%
District 10	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	81.8%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Did [coordinator] share your information according to your wishes?	73.6%	3.8%	1.9%	20.8%
District 10	72.2%	0.0%	0.0%	27.8%
Grand Traverse	79.2%	4.2%	0.0%	16.7%
Northwest	63.6%	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%
Did [coordinator] keep you updated on the status of applications or other efforts to get the help you needed?	77.4%	11.3%	5.7%	5.7%
District 10	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	79.2%	8.3%	4.2%	8.3%
Northwest	72.7%	18.2%	0.0%	9.1%

Helpfulness of Community Connections

	<i>Definitely yes</i>	<i>Mostly yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Didn't need</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
A: ...identifying what your needs are?	69.8%	15.1%	13.2%	1.9%	0.0%
District 10	66.7%	11.1%	16.7%	5.6%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	75.0%	16.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	63.6%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%
B: ...understanding the goal of the service to be provided?	79.2%	11.3%	7.5%	0.0%	1.9%
District 10	72.2%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	5.6%
Grand Traverse	79.2%	16.7%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	90.9%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
C: ...making a plan for how your needs might be met?	60.4%	18.9%	11.3%	7.5%	1.9%
District 10	55.6%	16.7%	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	70.8%	16.7%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Northwest	45.5%	27.3%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%
D: ...finding other resources you needed?	67.9%	15.1%	9.4%	7.5%	0.0%
District 10	61.1%	11.1%	16.7%	11.1%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	70.8%	16.7%	8.3%	4.2%	0.0%
Northwest	72.7%	18.2%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%
E: ...connecting you to services you couldn't get before?	66.0%	17.0%	11.3%	5.7%	0.0%
District 10	66.7%	11.1%	16.7%	5.6%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	70.8%	20.8%	4.2%	4.2%	0.0%
Northwest	54.5%	18.2%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%

Are there other ways in which COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS has been especially helpful to you?	
District 10	55.6%
Grand Traverse	62.5%
Northwest	63.6%

How is the help you're received from COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS different than what you've gotten in the past from other agencies?	
District 10	61.1%
Grand Traverse	83.3%
Northwest	54.5%

Was there help you wanted from COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS but didn't get?	
District 10	27.8%
Grand Traverse	8.3%
Northwest	27.3%

Impact of Community Connections

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>
After working with COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, I know more about what community services are available.	83.0%	11.3%	5.7%
District 10	77.8%	16.7%	5.6%
Grand Traverse	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%
Northwest	90.9%	9.1%	0.0%
After working with COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, I understand more about how to get the services or help I need.	86.8%	9.4%	3.8%
District 10	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%
Grand Traverse	87.5%	8.3%	4.2%
Northwest	90.9%	0.0%	9.1%
I'm confident that in the future, I will be able to get the services or help I need.	73.6%	11.3%	15.1%
District 10	77.8%	5.6%	16.7%
Grand Traverse	75.0%	8.3%	16.7%
Northwest	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%
After working with COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS, I am able to do more to support my own health.	83.0%	13.2%	3.8%
District 10	72.2%	16.7%	11.1%
Grand Traverse	95.8%	4.2%	0.0%
Northwest	72.7%	27.3%	0.0%

Recommendation of Community Connections

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Would you recommend other people work with COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS?	94.3%	5.7%
District 10	94.1%	5.9%
Grand Traverse	95.8%	4.2%
Northwest	91.7%	8.3%