

Community Perspective of Community Health Workers' Effectiveness

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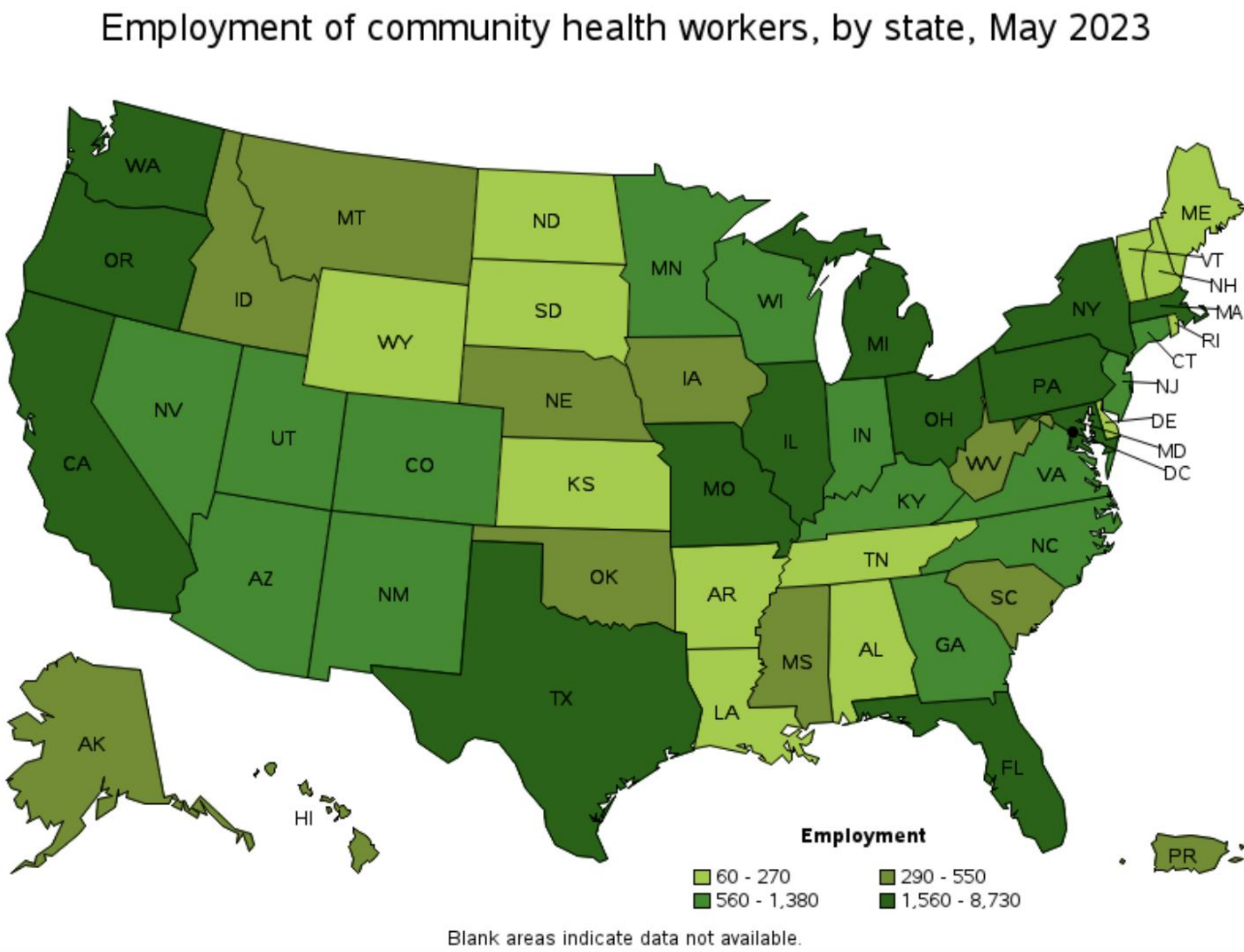
Background

Community Health Workers (CHWs) connect communities to health care and health-related systems, offering culturally relevant education and support.

In 2021 there were 67,000 CHWs in the United States, which is expected to increase by 10.6% by 2031.

Currently, there are no standardized measures of CHW efficacy across a variety of settings.

As more CHWs join our communities in Utah, action is needed to characterize the role of CHWs and understand what makes CHWs effective for public health initiatives.



Study Aim

Characterize the roles, effectiveness, and impact of Community Health Workers qualitatively.

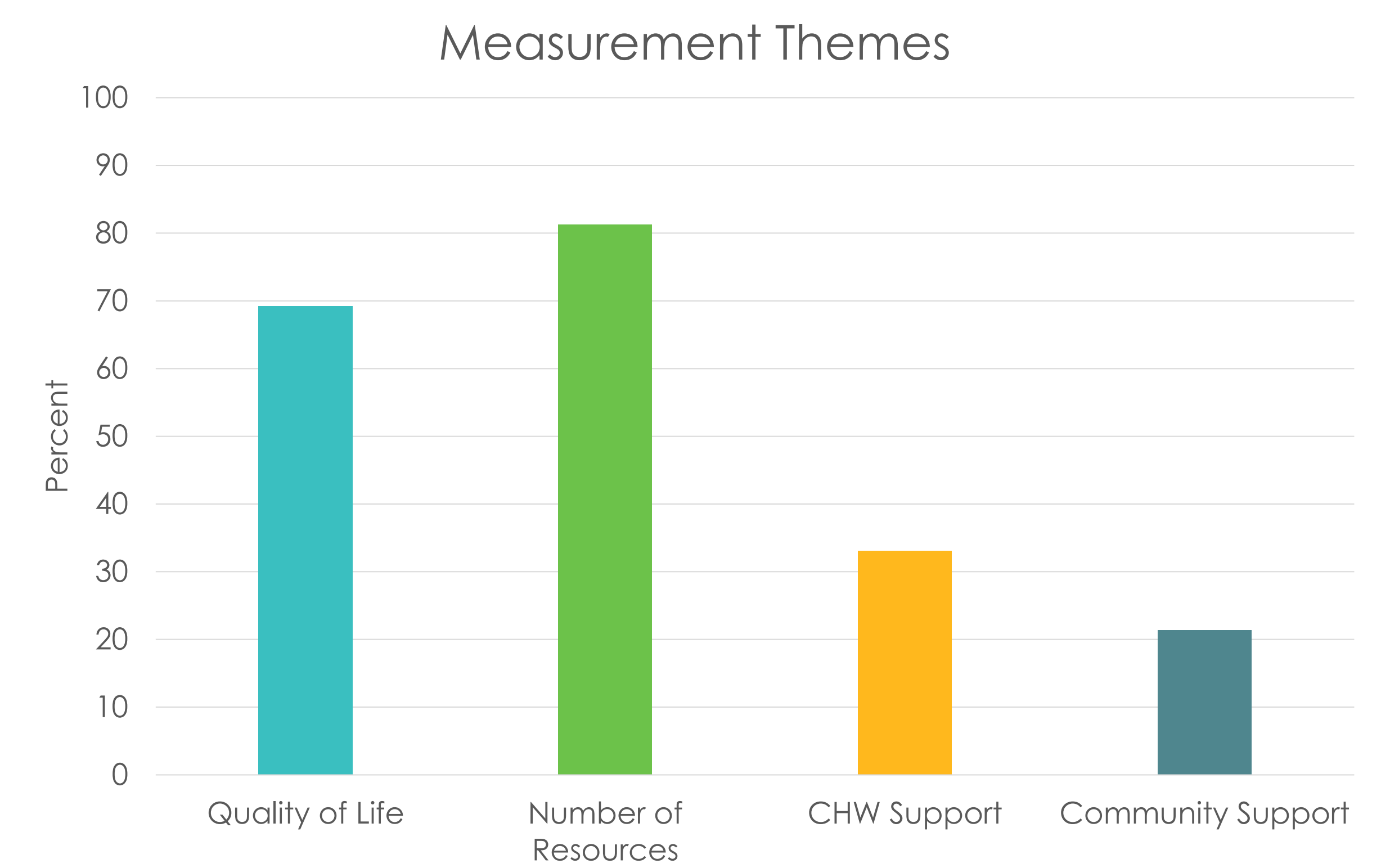
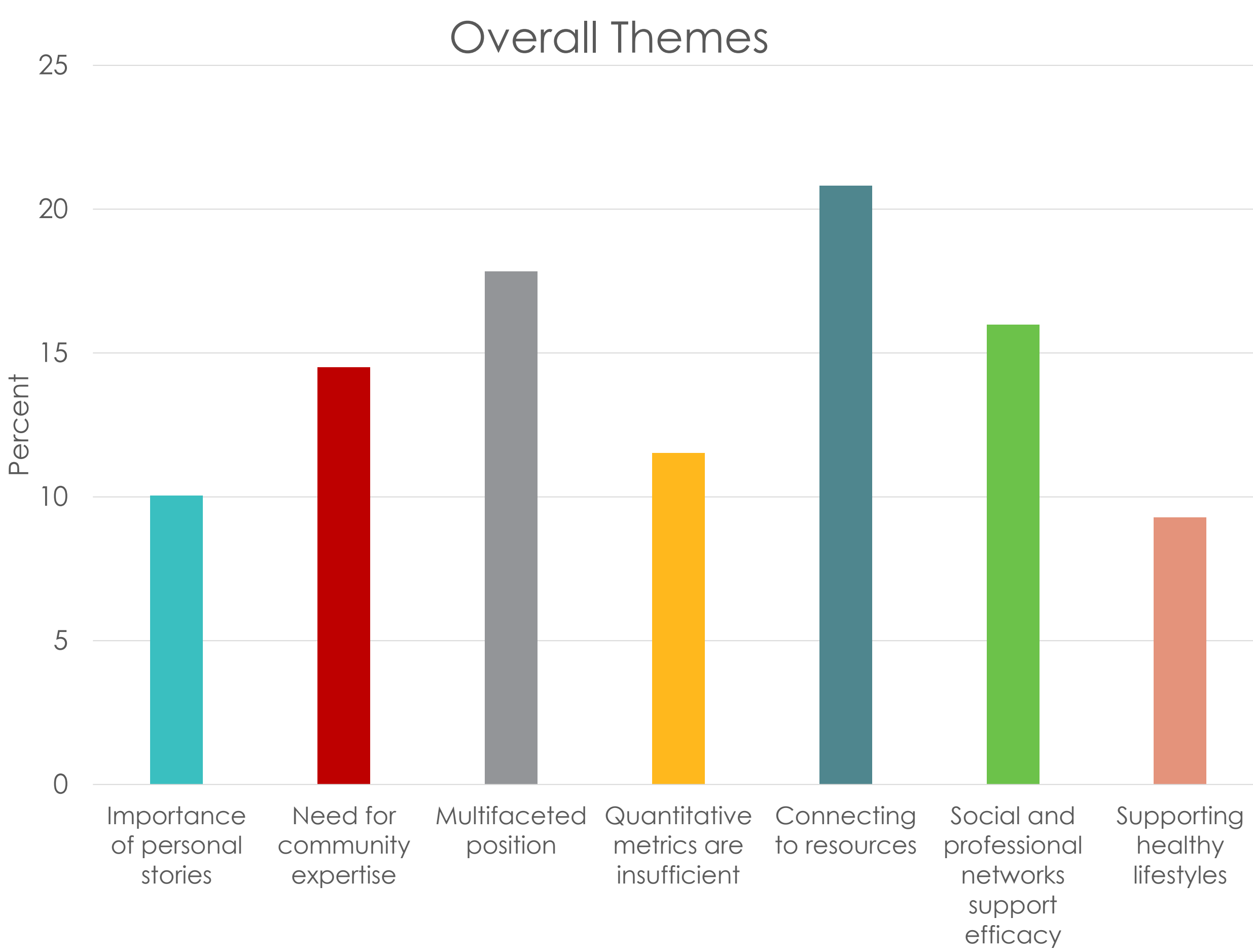
Methods

- Developed 10 interview questions with CHW input to measure CHW roles, barriers, and effectiveness.
- 1 facilitator conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 8 CHWs.
 - 1 CHW works in a public health agency
 - 2 CHWs work in a clinic setting
 - 3 CHWs work in health education or community education
 - 2 CHWs work in community-based organizations
- Interviews were assessed by thematic analysis using an inductive approach to identify emergent themes overall and specifically related to efficacy measurement.

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Results

Themes	Participant Quotes
Importance of Personal Stories	"It's not so much quantitative, it's more qualitative, right? It's about the stories that people tell and the stories that they share"
Need for Community Expertise	"I think a CHW is someone who grew up in the community that they're serving or who has the same or similar lived experiences."
Multifaceted Position	"So I think like it's a very versatile role, a very unique role, as unique as we all are very unique, and is very powerful and has a lot of responsibility too because you represent your community." "Our responsibility is more than the name of the position or the job because we do more than one job."
Quantitative Metrics are Insufficient	"The success that people think of is the quantitative pieces and the numbers, and people aren't numbers, and their experiences aren't numbers." "If we match numbers and narratives, then we can measure that [efficacy] successfully ."
Connecting to Resources	"I was able to to connect people with resources or making people leave people in better situations than they were."
Social and Professional Networks Support Efficacy	"It's incredible how those partnerships are so vital." "Partnerships are huge. And so there's no way that none of us could do it without having that partnership."
Supporting Healthy Lifestyles	"They are just one step in better health than they were." "I help with addressing social determinants of health needs, providing resources, making sure that minority youth, underserved communities are being taken care of well"



Interview Questions

- What is your role within your community/health care system/with individual clients? How do you accomplish this?
- How do you define success in your roles and how do you measure progress in these roles?
- How has the success of CHWs traditionally been measured and how do you hope it will be measured in the future?
- What resources or data do you need to be more successful at measuring your efficacy?
- What support do you need to be successful in your roles?
- What are barriers to your success?
- What are ways you had a positive impact in your community?
- Can you share some of the meaningful moments you've had as a CHW?

Summary of Key Findings

- CHWs serve as trusted connectors between communities and resources to address community health needs.
- Mixed-methods evaluation tools were recommended as current qualitative metrics fail to capture the complex and multidimensional contributions of CHWs.
- Key measures of CHW effectiveness include: the number of resources connected, improvements in community members' quality of life, and the support provided through both CHW and broader community networks.