

# Connected Care for Older Adults

A community health worker model  
to improve care in rural areas

A photograph showing a person in a dark shirt pushing a person in a wheelchair through a grassy field. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with a bright sun low on the horizon to the right, casting a warm glow over the landscape. A fence is visible in the background, and trees line the horizon under a cloudy sky.

Connected Care for Older Adults



## Older Adults

Older adults are a vital part of families and communities.







# Why does this **matter?**

**Older adults are currently the fastest growing demographic segment.  
Providing healthcare for older adults is more complex and costly.**

**18% → 24%**

Today, about 18% of Hood River and Wasco County residents are 65+.

By 2035, that number is projected to increase to 24%.

**5% over 85**

By 2035, over 5% of people in Hood River and Wasco Counties will be over the age of 85.

**56%**

People age 55 and over account for 56% of total healthcare spending in the US

**Spending doubles**

Studies show that medical expenses more than double between the ages 70 and 90

# Older adults in rural areas face **unique challenges**



Lack of transportation options



Fewer medical providers and specialists



Long distances to grocery and services



Lack of phone and internet connectivity



Lack of in-home care providers



Lack of access to community and senior services

# Complex **health conditions** and **social determinants of health** create additional barriers



18% are severely housing challenged



18% have been diagnosed with depression



39% report having a disability



11% live alone



31% reported cognitive decline or memory loss



22% annual income < \$20,000



25% report needing assistance with day-to-day activities



14% went without health care due to cost





# Connected Care for Older Adults



Community Health Workers support older adult patients with protocols based on Age Friendly Health Systems\*



CHWs communicate key information to primary care providers and support patient-centered care planning



CHWs connect patients and families to existing community resources and services



# Connected Care Protocols



\*THE 4MS OF AGE-FRIENDLY HEALTH SERVICES WERE DEVELOPED BY  
THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT

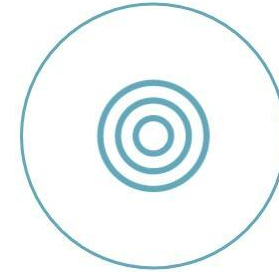
1 Increase access

2 Provide better care

3 Improve quality of life

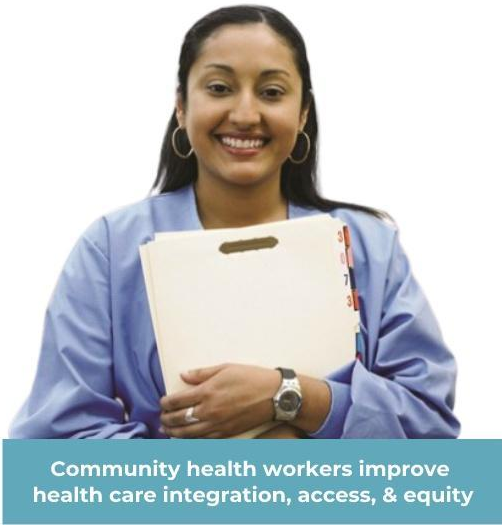
4 Decrease low-value care

5 Advance health equity



Primary Goals of  
the **Connected  
Care Pilot**





Community health workers improve health care integration, access, & equity

# Why **community health workers?**

**CHWs are system navigators, health educators, and patient advocates.** They connect patients with community resources and services and help patients and family members understand and advocate for their own healthcare needs.

**CHWs are trusted members of the community** who are often bi-lingual and bi-cultural, helping to provide patient-centered care for racially and ethnically diverse older adults and their families.

**CHWs have been improving care** related to diabetes, migrant outreach and perinatal care since 1988 at One Community Health.

# How are we putting **equity at the center**?



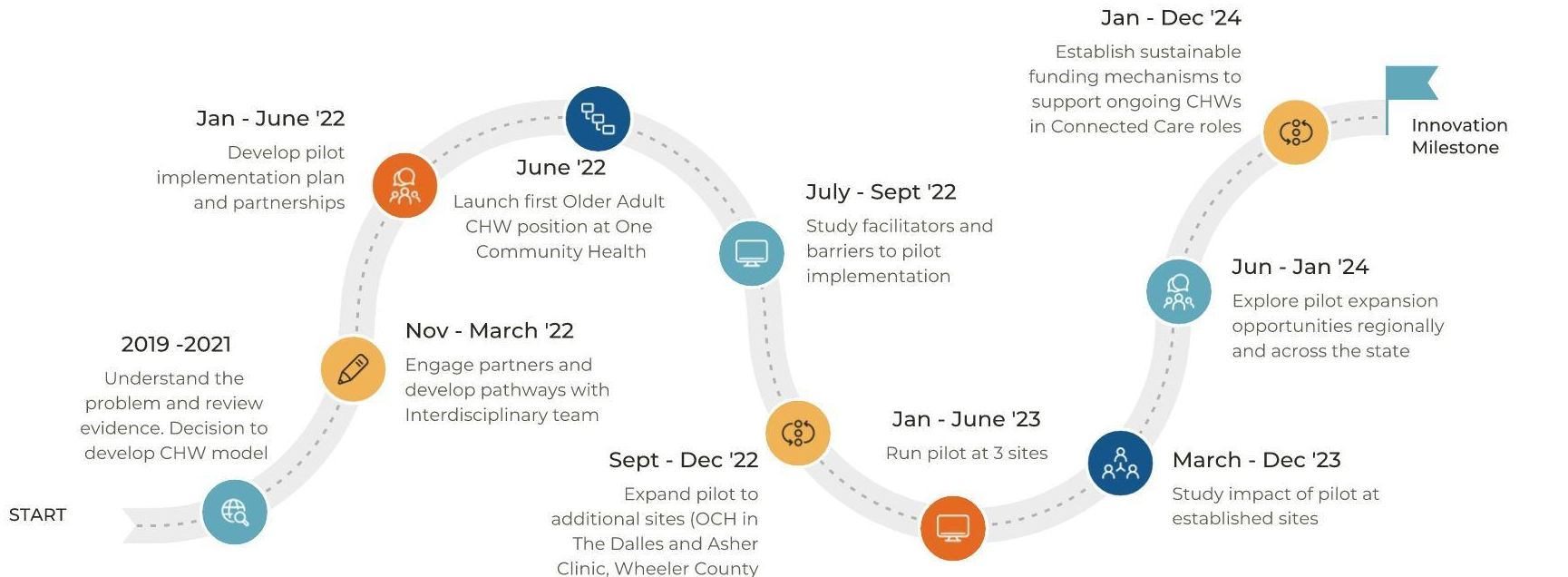
# Partners and Funders

This pilot is made possible through these partnerships





# Connected Care Pilot Timeline



Clinical Advisory Panel commitment to improving health care for older adults



Redesign health care delivery integrating CHWs

## Our ask of lawmakers

- Consider the unique needs of older adults in rural Oregon when setting policy
- Seek out low-cost, innovative solutions for rural regions
- Support long-term funding for clinical community health workers serving older adult patients

