



SHARED CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Connecting Communities to Care

SPOTLIGHT ON **ROSHNI BISWA**

Born in Bhutan, Roshni Diyali Biswa spent the first years of her life living in Beldangai One refugee camp—the place she considered home for nearly 20 years. It's a life that many would find difficult to imagine. But for Roshni, now settled with her family in Kansas City, her experience has allowed her to connect with hundreds of immigrant families in the U.S.



Today, Roshni serves as a community health worker (CHW) for the KC CARE Clinic, providing primary health care services to uninsured and underinsured city residents. The KC CARE Clinic works in partnership with the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County, supported by a \$1.9 million grant from United Health Foundation. Grant funding helps build CHW staff capacity, supporting training and management of new CHWs in Kansas City.

Community health workers like Roshni conduct personalized outreach and build trust with their clients. They address the social and health needs of diverse populations by providing affordable, localized and high-quality primary care coordination.





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A New Beginning

When Roshni was 17 years old, she and her family left Nepal for a new life in Kansas City, Missouri. "I wanted to see a new world; experience something new. I wanted this," Roshni said about moving to the U.S.

As Roshni and her family adjusted to life in Kansas City, they noticed that challenges like cultural preferences related to health care, language barriers, issues with transportation, medical costs and lack of available physicians and resources had a significant impact on their refugee community. Many struggled with their health and found it difficult to navigate the U.S. health system for the first time.

Roshni has stepped in to help address barriers, build confidence and connect people to essential resources, community programs and health services. Much of her work focuses on meeting families' immediate health needs, like filling prescriptions and making medical appointments.

"A lot of people with a need for insulin don't have it, and don't know how to make doctor's appointments or how to choose doctors," said Roshni's father, Reuben. "She is there to help. She makes their appointments and goes to their houses to visit, helping people get proper medications and resources for better health."

Becoming a Community Health Worker

Roshni's firsthand knowledge of her community's experiences and her ability to personally relate to her clients allows her to build trust, respect and understanding among those seeking care and assistance.

To date, nearly 1,000 patients have been served through the coordinated efforts of the KC CARE Clinic and Community Health Council of Wyandotte County program, and emergency room visits have decreased 75 percent.



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From coordinating transportation to a doctor's visit, to directing a patient to the pharmacy and instructing her to buy cough syrup, to offering to translate mail advertisements, Roshni is strengthening the community she now calls home. "Every day I help people," she said. "Every day I do something new for them. Every day I try to change their lives by making a phone call or setting up their appointments."

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ROSHNI BISWA | Community Health Worker in the Kansas City

