

Senior Interprofessional Design Projects
Partner Organization: CHASM Program, Michener Institute
Overview of Challenge

The context:

Healthcare delivery is increasingly being delivered beyond hospitals and clinics: in homes, neighbourhoods, schools, shelters, and other community settings. As healthcare systems seek to improve access, equity, prevention, and continuity of care, community health workers (CHWs) play an increasingly important role in connecting individuals and communities with health and social services.

CHWs bring unique expertise grounded in lived experience, trusted relationships, cultural responsiveness, and deep knowledge of community contexts. They serve as bridges between communities and healthcare systems, helping individuals navigate services, access resources, and address barriers that influence health and wellbeing.

At the same time, effective care in community settings depends on collaboration among many different providers, organizations, and community partners. Future health and social care professionals must be prepared to work alongside community health workers and recognize the valuable contributions they make to supporting individuals and communities.

Current realities:

While interprofessional education (IPE) has become an established component of many health and social care programs, opportunities for students to learn with, from, and about community health workers remain limited. As a result, many future healthcare providers graduate with little understanding of the role of community health workers or how to collaborate effectively with them in practice.

Similarly, as the CHASM program continues to grow and evolve, there is an opportunity to explore how interprofessional learning experiences could support CHW learners in developing collaborative competencies while ensuring that such experiences reflect the unique strengths, perspectives, and expertise of community health workers.

The opportunity

The CHASM program is uniquely positioned to help shape new models of interprofessional education that meaningfully include community health workers alongside learners from health and social care professions. Doing so has the potential to strengthen mutual understanding, improve collaborative practice, and better prepare all learners to work together in community-based care settings.

Fall 2026 presents an exciting opportunity for the CHASM program to serve as the community partner for Senior Interprofessional Design Projects, while also involving CHASM students directly in the Senior Projects learning experience. This partnership would create opportunities for CHASM students and University of Toronto IPE students to collaborate as co-designers, drawing on their diverse experiences and perspectives to imagine how interprofessional education opportunities could be integrated into the CHASM program.

Importantly, CHASM students will contribute not only as learners but also as experts in community health work and key stakeholders in the future development of the program. Their involvement would help ensure that any proposed solutions are grounded in community health worker expertise, responsive to learner needs, and aligned with the realities of community-based practice.

The challenge:

How might interprofessional education (IPE) be integrated into the CHASM program in ways that are meaningfully, sustainable, and mutually beneficial to both CHW learners and University of Toronto health and social care learners.

The task:

Working as an interprofessional team, students will explore the challenge from their individual and collective professional perspectives. Their task is to develop a **creative, realistic, and feasible design**.