

December 8, 2023

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell:

The undersigned **202** community health worker (CHW) networks, CHW employers, and public health organizations write in support of draft legislation titled the *Community Health Worker Access Act*. This bill would improve access to CHW services for Medicare and Medicaid enrollees, address preventable diseases¹ and disparities² that drive health spending, and improve the delivery of coordinated, whole-person care. **We urge members of Congress to co-sponsor this legislation and ask Congressional leaders to ensure its passage.**

A CHW is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison between health/social services and the community to facilitate access and improve the quality and cultural competence of services. A CHW also builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities.³ Other professionals who are essential members of this CHW profession with longstanding history, trust, and effectiveness include Promotoras serving Spanish-speaking populations and Community Health Representatives (CHRs) serving Tribal nations.

CHWs are in all 50 states and dozens of Tribal nations and territories, employed by health departments, health plans, hospitals, and community and faith-based organizations. Over two dozen states already recognize CHWs as professionals in state legislation and have developed clear scopes of work to integrate CHWs into Medicaid services. Over six decades of research⁴ has demonstrated CHWs' effectiveness in managing and addressing chronic diseases,⁵ particularly improving health in rural settings⁶ and underserved areas, and preventing costly hospitalizations.⁷ A randomized controlled trial of one evidence-based CHW program found a return of \$2.47 for every dollar invested, saving Medicaid \$4,200 per beneficiary each year.⁸

The **Community Health Worker Access Act** would improve reimbursement for Community Health Workers in Medicare and Medicaid while expanding access to community-based services for enrollees. The bill would provide reimbursement and access without copays for two new categories of CHW services for Medicare-eligible enrollees: 1) services to prevent illness, reduce physical or mental disability, and restore an individual to the best possible functional level; and 2) services to address social needs through education and referrals to health care and community-based organizations. Finally, the bill would support the work in several state Medicaid programs to expand access to CHW services through an enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for CHW services and through additional guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The Community Health Worker Access Act is a critical bill to support the CHW workforce and their work to improve health outcomes through prevention, trusted relationships, and a deep understanding of local and individual needs. The bill will allow CHWs, Promotoras, and CHRs to provide holistic, person-centered support to improve the health and wellbeing of Medicare and Medicaid enrollees. **We urge members of Congress to co-sponsor the *Community Health Worker Access Act* and to advance this critical legislation without delay.**

Sincerely,

National organizations (63):

National Association of Community Health Workers
Partners In Health

ACA Consumer Advocacy
ADAP Advocacy
Allergy & Asthma Network
American Association on Health and Disability
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)
American Muslim Health Professionals
American Public Health Association
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Center for Community Health Alignment
Centering Healthcare Institute
Coalition on Human Needs
Common Threads
Community Catalyst
CommUnity Healing through Activism & Strategic Mobilization (CHASM)
Community Health Worker Center for Research and Evaluation
Doctors for Global Health, DGH

Elation Health
Families USA
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality
HealthBegins
HealthHIV
Hepatitis B Foundation
Human Impact Partners
IAM Wellness Solutions, Inc.
Impact Care
Integrated Care For Kids-InCK Marks Network
Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved
JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI)
Lakeshore Foundation
Long COVID Justice
Lutheran Services in America
Main Street Alliance
Marked By Covid
MomsRising
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health
National Council of Urban Indian Health
National Council on Aging
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Immigration Law Center
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League
National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Patient-Led Research Collaborative
Pear Suite
People's Health Movement-USA
Prevention Institute
Primary Care Collaborative
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Rural Community Health Worker Network - C.O.R.E.
School-Based Health Alliance
Solve M.E.
Strategies for High Impact
Susan G. Komen

Transitions Clinic Network
Treatment Communities of America
Triage Cancer
Visión y Compromiso

State and local organizations (139):

A Better Chance A Better Community
Advance Youth Outreach/Sokoto House
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS Project of Southern Vermont
Alliance for Living
Arizona State University Community Health Worker Training Program
Arkansas Community Health Worker Association
Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement
Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (ARCHI)
California Association of Community Health Workers
California Pan Ethnic Health Network
Camden Coalition
Care Share Health Alliance
Cartwill Empowerment Solutions
Casa de Salud
Center for Health and Social Care Integration
Center for Population Health
Champions for Children, Inc.
CHW Strength
Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC)
Community Health Council of Wyandotte County
Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island
Community Health Worker Association of RI
Community Health Worker Network of Buffalo
Community Health Workers Association of Delaware
ConnectionHealth
Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association
Disability Policy Consortium
Ditch, Inc.
Doula Latinas International
Eastcentral PA Area Health Education Center
El Centro Hispano, Inc.
El Futuro
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center

Essentially Empowered Inc
Florida Community Health Worker Coalition
Forest Lake Chapter- Navajo Nation Chapter Governance
Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation
FREE Arizona
Gang Free Inc.
Georgia Community Health Worker Network
Georgia Watch
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Group Six Partners, LLC
Harrisburg Area YMCA
Hawai'i Community Health Worker Association
Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Healing Hands Health
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Health Care For All - Massachusetts
Health Community Coalition
Health Education Prevention & Promotion
Health Impact Ohio
Health Improvement Collaborative of Southeastern CT
Healthcare Network
Illinois Community Health Workers Association
Illinois Aging Together
Illinois CHW Association
Illinois Public Health Association
Institute for Public Health Innovation
JSJ Consulting, LLC
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Kansas Community Health Worker Coalition (KCHWC)
Kau Rural Health Community Association Inc.
Kentucky Voices for Health
Kepro
Latino Network
Ledge Light Health District
Louisiana Community Health Outreach Network
Maine Community Health Worker Initiative
Maine Primary Care Association
Maricopa County Community College
Maryland Community Health Worker Association
Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW)

Mecklenburg County Public Health
Medicaid Matters New York
Micronesian Islander Community
Midwest Asian Health Association
Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance
Minnesota Public Health Association
Minority Health Consultants
Mississippi Community Health Workers Association
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Maryland Chapter
NC Counts Coalition
NC FIELD, Inc.
New Hampshire CHW Coalition
New London Human Services Network
New Mexico / Southern Colorado CHR Association
New Virginia Majority
North Carolina Community Health Worker Association
Northeast PA Area Health Education Center
Northwest Regional Primary Care Association
Ohio University Ohio Alliance for Population Health
Operation Gateway Inc.
Oregon Community Health Workers Association
Partnership for Better Health
Penn Center for Community Health Workers
Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center
Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers (PACHC)
Pennsylvania CHW Collaborative
Pennsylvania Public Health Association
Physicians for Social Responsibility Iowa Chapter
Primary Care Health Partners, St. Albans Primary Care
Refugee Community Partnership
South Carolina Community Health Worker Association
Southeast Arizona Health Education Center, SEAHEC
Southeastern Healthcare of North Carolina, Inc.
Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
Southwest PA Area Health Education Center
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center
Tempe Community Action Agency
Tennessee Community Health Worker Association
Texas Association of Promotores/Community Health Workers
The Arc of North Carolina
The Children's Partnership

The Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation
The Midwife Center
Together for West Philadelphia
Two Over 24 LLC
Umemba Health LLC
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County Texas
University of Illinois Mile Square Office of Community Engagement & Neighborhood Health Partnerships (OCEAN-HP)
University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
Unlimited Potential
Utah Community Health Worker Association (UCHWA)
Valley Health Partners Community Health Center
Valley Of the Sun YMCA
Virginia Community Health Worker Association
Virginia Community Healthcare Association
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Voices for Virginia's Children
Voices of Hope, Inc.
Washington Defender Association
WAVE Educational Fund
WellShare International
West Texas Community Health Worker/Promotores Association
Women for a Healthy Environment
Women Leading 4 Wellness and Justice

¹ According to an estimate in *The Lancet Public Health*, more than a quarter of health spending is associated with preventable diseases. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30203-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30203-6/fulltext) Bolnick HJ, Bui AL, Bulchis A, Chen C, Chapin A, Lomsadze L, Mokdad AH, Millard F, Dieleman JL. Health-care spending attributable to modifiable risk factors in the USA: an economic attribution analysis. *Lancet Public Health*. 2020 Oct;5(10):e525-e535. doi: 10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30203-6. PMID: 33007211.

² Davis A, Batra N, Dhar A, Bhatt J, Gerhardt W, Rush B. US health care can't afford health inequities. *Deloitte Insights*. 2022 Jun. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/health-care/economic-cost-of-health-disparities.html>

³ American Public Health Association. Community Health Workers. <https://www.apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/community-health-workers>

⁴ Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, National Association of Community Health Workers. Community Health Workers: Evidence of their Effectiveness. <https://www.astho.org/globalassets/pdf/community-health-workers-summary-evidence.pdf>

⁵ Kim K, Choi JS, Choi E, Nieman CL, Joo JH, Lin FR, Gitlin LN, Han H. Effects of Community-Based Health Worker Interventions to Improve Chronic Disease Management and Care Among Vulnerable Populations: A Systematic Review." *American Journal of Public Health*. 2016 Apr;106(4): e3-e28. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302987>

⁶ Studies in [Alabama](#), [Texas](#), and [South Dakota](#) have demonstrated the success of CHW programs in rural settings.

⁷ Carter J, Hassan S, Walton A, Yu L, Donelan K, Thorndike AN. Effect of Community Health Workers on 30-Day Hospital Readmissions in an Accountable Care Organization Population: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Network Open*. 2021 May;5(4): e2110936. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.10936>;

Kangovi S, Mitra N, Norton L, Harte R, Zhao X, Carter T, Grande D, Long JA. Effect of Community Health Worker Support on Clinical Outcomes of Low-Income Patients Across Primary Care Facilities: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2018 Dec 1;178(12):1635-1643. doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2018.4630. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30422224/>

⁸ Kangovi S, Mitra N, Grande D, Long JA, Asch DA. Evidence-Based Community Health Worker Program Addresses Unmet Social Needs And Generates Positive Return On Investment. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2020;39(2):207-213. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00981. www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00981