

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 diseases<sup>1</sup> and disparities<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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 research<sup>4</sup> has demonstrated CHWs' effectiveness in managing and addressing chronic diseases,<sup>5</sup> particularly improving health in rural settings<sup>6</sup> and underserved areas, and preventing costly hospitalizations.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.  
Douglas 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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>

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

<sup>4</sup> 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>

<sup>5</sup> 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>

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

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<sup>7</sup> 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/>

<sup>8</sup> 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](http://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00981)