



ADVANCING INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

March 18, 2024

Representative Susan Donovan, Chair  
House Health and Human Services Committee  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Support of H-7875**

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

**On behalf of the Care Transformation Collaborative of Rhode Island (CTC-RI), I write in strong support of H-7875 amending Chapter 27-18 of the General Laws to include coverage of Community Health Workers (CHWs) by commercial health insurers in Rhode Island.**

CTC-RI's diverse Board of Directors and large group of stakeholders represent over 800 adult and pediatric primary care providers who serve over 700,000 Rhode Islanders. As a nonprofit, public/private partnership, the mission of CTC-RI is to lead the transformation of primary care in Rhode Island in the context of an integrated health care system; and to improve the quality of care, the patient experience of care, the affordability of care and the health of the populations we serve.

CTC-RI has invested in several projects that have utilized CHWs in various capacities. These projects have demonstrated the value of having CHWs as part of multi-disciplinary care teams. Working alongside clinical staff, CHWs have the unique ability to engage people in care who may not otherwise receive the services and care they need and are a key lever to advancing health equity. The role of CHWs is expansive and CTC-RI has provided training and technical assistance to various CHWs on working population health initiatives with primary care, Health Equity Zones and Medicaid Accountable Entities through the *Rhode to Equity* project.

Findings from our project evaluations and in alignment with national evidence demonstrating the cost benefit of using CHWs due to improved clinical outcomes for individuals with complex medical, behavioral and social needs. A 2020 Brown University cost and utilization evaluation estimated a return on investment of \$2.85 for every \$1 spent on Community Health Teams, a care model with CHWs and Behavioral Health clinicians serving complex patients.

Rhode Island Medicaid has recognized the value of CHWs and covers services provided by this workforce. Medicare recently included CHW services as a covered benefit as well. A multi-payer approach is needed in Rhode Island and having commercial insurers cover services provided by CHWs is essential to sustaining this valuable workforce. We fully support, in every way possible, House bill #7875 to expand insurance coverage of CHWs.

Sincerely,

Debra Hurwitz, MBA, BSN, RN  
Executive Director, CTC-RI