



March 18, 2024

Honorable Susan Donovan
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7875 – Relating to Insurance -- Accident and Sickness Insurance

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the House and Human Services Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter in support of House Bill 7875, which would require insurance coverage for all Community Health Workers (CHWs) services, including health and promotion coaching, health education and training, health system navigation and resource coordination services, care planning, and follow-up care. CHWs have been shown to improve health outcomes for individuals and communities while saving health care costs.

Rhode Island's eight Community Health Centers provide comprehensive primary care to 200,000 individuals; 90% are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, Medicaid covers 55%, and 9% are uninsured. Health center patients can face various non-medical factors, including socioeconomic status, education, employment, housing, access to nutritious food and transportation, influencing health behaviors, access to services, and overall health outcomes. CHWs are integral to addressing these health care disparities, helping bridge the gap between patients and health care providers by offering community-based culturally sensitive care, health education, and navigation services.

Currently, CHW services' funding primarily relies on grants and Medicaid billing. However, this funding strategy is not sustainable for these vital services. House Bill 7875 is a crucial step towards ensuring the sustainability and recognition of the indispensable role that CHWs play in the community and the broader health care system.

Sincerely,

M. Campbell

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager

Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program
East Bay Community Action Program~ Providence Community Health Centers
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health