



The Honorable Susan R. Donovan Chairwoman  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: Support for 2025 - H 6117 Relating to Insurance - Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies - Reimbursement for Community Health Worker Services**

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am writing as a proud Community Health Worker (CHW) in support of H 6117, legislation that would enable the reimbursement of CHW services through private insurance in Rhode Island. CHWs are trusted members of the communities we serve. We build bridges between individuals and the healthcare and social service systems, especially for those who have historically been left behind. Every day, we work on the frontlines addressing Social Determinants of Health (SDOHs)—housing instability, food insecurity, transportation barriers, language access, and more. These are the real issues that impact health outcomes, and CHWs are uniquely equipped to meet people where they are and connect them with the services and supports they need.

In Rhode Island, CHWs play an essential role in improving health equity. We coordinate care, navigate complex systems, provide culturally appropriate education, and advocate for our community members. Our work helps reduce unnecessary ER visits, improve chronic disease management, support behavioral health, and ensure that people aren't falling through the cracks. We serve immigrants, low-income families, communities of color, and others who have been disproportionately impacted by health disparities.

Despite our proven impact, CHWs continue to be undervalued and underfunded. H 6117 is an opportunity to change that. Reimbursing CHW services through private insurance not only recognizes the critical role we play, but also ensures the sustainability of this workforce and the expansion of community-based care that meets people's real needs.

I urge you to support and pass this bill and take a meaningful step toward a more equitable, people-centered health system in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time and commitment to our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara Okoro", written over a blue horizontal line.

Barbara Okoro  
Community Health Worker