

April 10, 2025

(Submitted electronically via [HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov))

The Honorable Rep. Susan Donovan  
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB6117 - An Act Relating To Insurance -- Accident And Sickness Insurance Policies

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

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter in support of House Bill 6117, which would require insurance coverage for all Community Health Workers (CHWs) services, including health promotion coaching, health education and training, health system navigation, resource coordination, care planning, and follow-up care. CHWs are frontline public health workers who have been shown to improve health outcomes for individuals and communities while saving health care costs.<sup>1</sup>

Rhode Island's eight Community Health Centers provide comprehensive primary care to 210,000 individuals; 85% are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, 55% of patients are enrolled in Medicaid, and 9% are uninsured. Many health center patients face various non-medical factors that affect their health outcomes, including no transportation, unstable employment, lack of permanent housing, and limited access to nutritious food. CHWs play an integral role in addressing these factors that lead to health care disparities by bridging the gap between patients and health care providers, by offering community-based culturally sensitive care, health education, and navigation services.

Funding for CHW services primarily relies on grants or Medicaid, but this funding strategy is not sustainable. Commercial coverage for CHWs represents a step towards achieving a sustainable solution. Reimbursement and coverage rules must align with the CHW model of care delivery to ensure equitable access to health care, enhance health outcomes, and foster healthier communities.

By recognizing the value of CHWs through adequate reimbursement and coverage, we can reduce disparities, promote preventive care, and ultimately create a more inclusive health care landscape.

Thank you for your consideration.

*M. Campbell*

Melissa Campbell  
Policy Manager  
RI Health Center Association

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 Agency  
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health

<sup>1</sup> Astho Community Health Workers: Evidence of Their Effectiveness. <https://www.astho.org/globalassets/pdf/community-health-workers-summary-evidence.pdf>