



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

February 28, 2025

Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of more than 235 member hospitals and health systems, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) writes to highlight the vital role of community health workers (CHW) in strengthening Pennsylvania's health care system.

Community health workers are trusted members of the communities they serve. As non-clinical professionals, they help bridge the gap between individuals and the health care system, improve care coordination, patient education, and health outcomes—particularly in underserved urban and rural areas. Because CHWs often share the background, language, and lived experiences of those they support, they play a key role in addressing health disparities.

At a time when Pennsylvania faces a well-documented health care workforce shortage, CHWs offer a critical connection between vulnerable populations and the care they need. By providing outreach, education, and removing or lessening barriers to access, they help hospitals and health systems keep patients healthier, reduce preventable hospital visits, and improve overall community health. Their work is especially valuable in areas like maternal health, where they assist expectant and new mothers in accessing prenatal and postpartum care, leading to better outcomes for both mothers and infants.

Despite the significant contributions of CHWs, Pennsylvania does not currently allow them to bill Medicaid for their services, placing additional strain on an already burdened workforce. Many other states have taken steps to recognize the value of CHWs by authorizing Medicaid reimbursement through state plan amendments, ensuring sustainable support for this essential workforce.

Recognizing and integrating CHWs into Pennsylvania's health care system will strengthen our ability to meet patients where they are, improve health equity, and enhance overall care engagement and delivery. On behalf of HAP, thank you for the opportunity to share our support, and for your commitment to the health of our communities.

Sincerely,

Arielle Chortanoff
Vice President, State Advocacy