



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 568

DATE: March 14, 2024

SPONSOR: Delegates Bagnall and R. Lewis

ASSIGNED TO: Health and Government Operations

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT (Department of Health and Human Services)

Community Health Worker Appreciation Day

House Bill 568 would require the Governor to proclaim May 8th as Community Health Worker Appreciation Day. The proclamation would urge educational and cultural organizations to observe the occasion with information programs and activities. The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services supports House Bill 568 and the important work that Community Health Workers do in our communities, with the suggested amendment to line 18 to substitute “Community Health Worker Day” for “Community Health Workers”.

Community health workers are trusted members of the community with local knowledge and shared life experiences that make them uniquely able to identify problems contributing to health disparities, improve access to health services, and connect people to needed social services.¹ Public health departments, such as the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, community-based organizations, health systems and insurers have increased employment of Community Health Workers, in part to enhance their ability to address social determinants of health, support access to primary and preventive health programs, and reduce unnecessary use of services for conditions that can be managed by primary care among difficult-to-serve populations.² Increased job growth and employment among Community Health Workers reflects the increasing demand for services delivered by Community Health Workers. In 2020, an estimated 64,100 Community Health Workers were employed in the United States. The majority of Community Health Workers are Hispanic (35%), non-Hispanic White (39%), Black (15.5%), and female (82%). The US Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected a 21% increase in Community Health Workers jobs by 2030, a rate of growth much faster than the average for all US occupations (7.7%).³

For these reasons, Community Health Workers deserve to be recognized by the State of Maryland and honored for their contributions to the health and well-being of Marylanders. The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services urges a favorable report of House Bill 568 with the suggested amendment.

¹ Jones, TM, *et al.* Hourly Wages and Turnover of Community Health Workers According to US State Certification Policy and Medicaid Reimbursement, 2010–2021. *American Journal of Public Health* 112, 1480-1488, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2022.306965>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*