



HB 568
Community Health Worker Appreciation Day
Hearing of the House Health & Government Operations Committee
March 14, 2023
1:00 PM

Position: SUPPORT

Maryland Latinos Unidos is submitting testimony in support of House Bill 586. Maryland Latinos Unidos is a 501 c3 that convenes a statewide network of organizations, businesses, and individuals who support Latino and immigrant communities and calls attention to the disparities and inequities faced by our communities. We strongly support HB 586 to proclaim May 8th as Community Health Worker Day. As an organization committed to advocating for the rights and well-being of Latino and immigrant communities in Maryland, we recognize the valuable role that community health workers have in promoting health equity and access to healthcare services.

Community health workers serve as trusted liaisons between underserved communities and healthcare providers, bridging gaps in access to care and addressing cultural and linguistic barriers that hinder healthcare delivery and public health initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, community health workers served as the frontline workers to not only address misinformation and access to vaccines and testing, but they delivered groceries, they knocked on doors to reach communities often defined as “hard to reach.” When in reality, our systems could not reach them. Woweever, community health workers ensured that every community member was reached. This bill is a crucial step towards recognizing their tireless effort in supporting our communities who continuously get left behind by our systems of care. By urging educational and cultural organizations to observe this day with informative programs and activities, we can elevate the visibility of community health workers and highlight their contributions to improving the health and well-being of all Marylanders.

Additionally, community health workers are the backbone of public health outreach and education efforts, making significant impacts in our communities. Studies have shown that communities served by community health workers experience improved health outcomes, including higher rates of preventive care utilization, reduced hospital admissions, and better management of chronic conditions. As an organization that works closely with Latino community health workers across the state of Maryland, we have worked hand in hand with them to address HIV testing, maternal health care, connecting Marylanders with resources that address social determinants of health, and training them to promote health equity in their communities.

Furthermore, community health workers are uniquely positioned to make connections within communities and address the root causes of health disparities. Through their deep understanding

of local culture, language, and social dynamics, they can effectively engage with community members, build trust, and empower individuals to take control of their health. This proactive approach to healthcare delivery not only improves health outcomes but also reduces healthcare costs and fosters healthier, more resilient communities.

In conclusion, Maryland Latinos Unidos urges all members of the General Assembly to vote yes to declare May 8th as Community Health Worker Appreciation Day in Maryland. Together, let us commemorate Community Health Worker Appreciation Day and honor the dedication and impact of these essential frontline workers and their critical role in advancing health equity and improving healthcare access for all Marylanders.

Sincerely,
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Senior Manager of Operations and Innovation
Maryland Latinos Unidos