



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 568 - Community Health Worker Appreciation Day

Hearing Date: March 14, 2024

Position: Support

Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 568 - Community Health Worker Appreciation Day*. This bill requires the Governor to proclaim May 8th as Community Health Worker Appreciation Day.

As a network of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), we work towards more equitable health care by providing somatic, behavioral, and oral health services to underserved communities. We have great respect for Community Health Workers (CHWs), who play a unique role in the pursuit of more equitable health care by serving as a bridge between communities and health care systems. As trusted members of their communities, they connect community members to health care services and other resources, disseminate culturally and linguistically appropriate public health information, and serve as advocates for community members.

Recognition of CHWs has increased in recent years, but more needs to be done to educate people about the potential of the CHW workforce in the lives of Marylanders. For example, the Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends engaging CHWs to increase cervical cancer screening, based on strong evidence that CHW delivered interventions increased screenings¹. This kind of recommendation highlights just one of the many ways CHWs can improve lives in the communities they serve.

We urge a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

¹ Community Preventive Services Task Force, Cancer Screening: Interventions Engaging Community Health Workers – Cervical Cancer <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/media/pdf/Cervical-Cancer-Screening-CHW-508.pdf>