

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk

Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

House Office Building, Room 241

6 Bladen Street

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 65 – Community Health Worker Appreciation Day

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for House Bill 65, *Community Health Worker Appreciation Day*. This legislation proposes that the Governor annually proclaim May 8 as Community Health Worker Appreciation Day, urging educational and cultural organizations to observe this day with informative programs and activities.

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are vital connectors between healthcare systems and the communities they serve, particularly within Maryland's Latino population. Their roles encompass health education, advocacy, and the provision of essential services, often bridging cultural and linguistic gaps that can impede access to care. By establishing a dedicated day of appreciation, HB 65 acknowledges the indispensable contributions of CHWs and emphasizes the importance of their work in promoting public health.

Through our initiatives, MLU has witnessed the profound impact CHWs have on improving health outcomes. They not only provide critical health information but also build trust within communities, encouraging preventive care and healthier lifestyles. Recognizing their efforts aligns with MLU's mission to advance health equity and empower underserved populations.

We believe that formalizing Community Health Worker Appreciation Day will elevate the visibility of CHWs, attract more individuals to this essential profession, and encourage support for policies that enhance their training and resources. This recognition is a meaningful step toward a more equitable healthcare system that values and supports those who are instrumental in its delivery.

MLU urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 65, reinforcing Maryland's commitment to acknowledging and supporting the pivotal role of Community Health Workers in fostering healthier communities.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

Maryland Latinos Unidos

corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org