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Health and Government Operations
Committee
Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long-Term Care

Public Health and
Minority Health Disparities

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

26 February 2025

HB871 – Health Services Cost Review Commission - Community Benefits - Community Health Worker Workforce Program

Madame Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 871.

Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are an essential part of Maryland's public health framework. Through cultural competency and targeted community outreach, they work to facilitate access to social services and bridge the healthcare gap in underserved communities. CHWs are effective at improving health outcomes and are an integral part of our overall health system, but in many ways they still struggle to attain financial support for their work.

To provide more formal support for CHWs, HB871 clarifies the eligibility of CBOs for Community Benefit funding and provides an MOU framework for partnerships between hospitals and CBOs. There are several requirements included in the HB871 hospital/CBO partnership framework:

- Identifying accountability for patient health outcomes
- Developing criteria for measuring the impact of a partnership
- Creating responsibility for recruitment and training
- Providing insurance and other financial benefits as necessary

Non-Profit Hospitals are already required to fund Community Benefit initiatives that address health disparities in the communities they serve; however, CBOs may be overlooked as potential recipients. By providing a clear framework for partnership, HB871 encourages greater partnership between hospitals and CBOs, moving us closer to long-term support of CHWs. Requirements for a MOU also protect CHWs under hospital/CBO partnerships by giving clear guidelines for how funding should be used to support their work, and provide greater mobility for CHWs across our entire healthcare continuum.

HB871 will provide non-profit hospitals a clearer way to fund and support Maryland's CHW workforce through partnerships with CBOs. This approach will not only benefit the CHW workforce, but also allows hospitals to better address social determinants of health in their communities. I respectfully request a favorable report on HB871.