



Maryland Community Health System

Bill Number: House Bill 871 – Health Services Cost Review Commission - Community Benefits - Community Health Worker Workforce Program.

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Hearing Date: February 26, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 871 – Health Services Cost Review Commission - Community Benefits - Community Health Worker Workforce Program*. This bill adds a community health worker workforce program to the list of defined community benefits that may be provided by hospitals in the state.

As a network of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), we work towards more equitable health care by providing primary, behavioral, and dental 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 screenings.¹ This kind of recommendation highlights just one of the many ways CHWs can improve lives in the communities they serve.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

¹ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10033345/>