

**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, February 21, 2023**

**SB 991, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement  
For Community Health Workers**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 991, An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement For Community Health Workers**. CHA supports SB 991.

Connecticut hospitals continue to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and are now facing new challenges of treating sicker patients than they saw before the pandemic, with a dedicated but smaller workforce who are exemplary but exhausted. They are also experiencing significant financial hardships brought on by record inflation. Through it all, hospitals have been steadfast, providing high-quality care for everyone who walks through their doors, regardless of ability to pay.

SB 991 proposes to establish Medicaid reimbursement for certified Community Health Workers. The American Public Health Association defines Community Health Workers (CHWs) as “a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served” (APHA 2021). A hallmark feature of CHWs is their connection to their community and patients based on their shared socioeconomic and cultural background, often serving the communities in which they reside.

CHWs play an integral role in helping hospitals advance health equity and improving connections between hospitals and the communities they serve. CHWs help patients overcome barriers to care and address both the clinical and social care needs of patients.

CHWs have historically been employed by community-based organizations, and more recently, employed by hospitals and healthcare systems. When employed by hospitals, CHWs provide health education, support participation in follow-up care, and coordinate access to essential community support. CHWs may also help hospitals improve healthcare quality and strengthen relationships and trust within the communities for which they provide care.

CHWs are often trained to have basic knowledge of health conditions and to provide health coaching using techniques that include motivation and support. CHWs frequently possess expertise in the social drivers of health and can assist patients with economic, social, and environmental resources to help improve healthcare access and outcomes. CHWs augment patient engagement by strengthening patient connections to hospitals and identifying and helping to make connections between healthcare and social service systems.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.