

Fact Sheet on CHW Workforce Policy

Illinois Health Care and Human Service Reform Act

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have a close understanding of the community served. Within the language of the Illinois Health Care and Human Services Reform Act (Public Act 102-0004) and trailer bill amendments (Public Act - 102-0674), the Illinois Black Caucus, which led passage of the legislation, recognized the impact of CHWs in minimizing health inequities. As a result, the legislation opened pathways to support the sustainability of the workforce through voluntary CHW certification and reimbursement. While this Act's passage puts the process of full CHW integration into motion, implementation will require continued stakeholder engagement in collaboration and advocacy to fully realize all that can be accomplished through this legislation, as described below.

Public Acts 102-0004 and 102-0674 advance the following CHW workforce priorities:

Training - (SB 336) Section 5-17(c)

- The Act directs the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to collaborate with state education boards and the Illinois CHW Association (ILCHWA) to develop protocols to certify academic and community-based training programs to provide multi-tiered opportunities
- Training programs are to be approved based on affordability, core competencies, and best practices.

Certification Board - (SB 336) Section 5-17(a)

- The Act creates the Illinois CHW Review Board, which will live within IDPH and will be co-chaired by the Department of Public Health and ILCHWA.
- The Board will consist of CHWs, CHW employers, representatives from various state agencies, and other key stakeholders.
- The Board will develop rules certifying both individual CHWs, including those being grandfathered in, and academic and community-based training programs.

Reimbursement - (HB158) Section 5-20

- The Act directs the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) to develop a list of services for which CHWs will be eligible for Medicaid reimbursement, subject to fiscal appropriation. HFS must seek approval from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reimburse CHWs under Medicaid.
- The Act directs HFS to amend its contracts with managed care entities to allow them to employ CHWs or subcontract with community based organizations (CBOs) that employ CHWs.
- The act requires that, in order to be reimbursed by Medicaid, CHWs must work under the supervision of an "enrolled medical program provider," and be certified. Certification is not required for employment, since noncertified CHWs may be employed through funding sources outside of Medicaid.

References:

H.B. 0158, 102nd Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. (Ill. 2021).

S.B. 0336, 102nd Gen. Assemb., Veto. Sess. (Ill. 2021).

Discussion Guide Illinois Health Care and Human Service Reform Act (Public Act 102-0004), University of Illinois: Cancer Center; Harvard Law School: Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (May 2021).