



## Supporting Community Health Workers for Health Equity and Access

*An Act relative to health equity and community health workers (H.359) creates the financing and infrastructure needed to fully leverage community health workers (CHWs) to improve health outcomes and support cost containment efforts in the Commonwealth.*

## Advancing the Triple Aim for Massachusetts

### Improve Population Health

CHWs address social drivers of health such as housing, food access, and language barriers, improving prevention, chronic disease management, and health equity while reaching residents traditional systems struggle to engage.

### Reduce Health Care Costs

Evidence from Massachusetts Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and prior state investments show that CHWs reduce emergency department use, improve care coordination, and support cost containment — but current funding relies on unstable short-term grants.

*A single reimbursable CHW service — such as home-based care coordination for a high-risk MassHealth member with asthma, diabetes, or heart failure — can prevent repeated emergency department visits and hospitalizations. Keeping just one individual stable in the community can save the health care system hundreds of thousands of dollars over time.*

### Improve Patient Experience

Because CHWs share language, culture, and lived experience with the communities they serve, they build trust, improve care adherence, and strengthen connections between patients and providers.

## **5 Key Reasons to Pass H.359**

### **1. Stabilizes Existing Investments**

Massachusetts already funds CHWs through fragmented grants and programs. This bill creates a sustainable structure to support a workforce already delivering results.

### **2. Demonstrates Proven Cost and Outcome Impact**

CHWs have been found to improve access, reduce unnecessary utilization, and support better health outcomes — while preventing costly emergency and inpatient care.

### **3. Builds on Existing Workforce Infrastructure**

Massachusetts has strong CHW training and certification systems but lacks unified statewide financing and coordination to sustain the workforce.

### **4. Positions Massachusetts to Leverage Federal Funding**

Medicaid allows reimbursement for CHWs, and more recently, Medicare covers services aligned with CHW work. This bill positions Massachusetts to draw down and align those funds.

### **5. Establishes Strong, Statewide Support and Readiness**

A coalition of 20+ organizations — including CHWs, hospitals, community-based organizations, and public health leaders — supports this legislation and will be key resources for implementation.

## **Bottom Line**

H.359 strengthens a workforce already improving outcomes across Massachusetts. By creating sustainable financing and infrastructure for CHWs, this legislation will:

- **Improve population health**
- **Reduce health care costs**
- **Improve patient experience**

Passing this bill is a strategic, cost-effective step toward a more equitable and efficient health care system for the Commonwealth.

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