



CAFCA

Connecticut Association
for Community Action

Connecticut's Community Action Agencies: Reimbursement for Certified Community Health Workers

Proposal: Services provided by DPH-certified Community Health Workers should be reimbursed through Medicaid. As an interim step, American Rescue Plan Act funds should be allocated to these services to help people impacted by the pandemic and economic downturn.

Background

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline agents of change, providing culturally responsive outreach, education, advocacy, care coordination, and linkages to health and social services – all to improve people's health, well-being, and opportunities for success. CHWs work in Community Action Agencies, other social service agencies, and health systems.

Connecticut's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are anti-poverty agencies, connecting about 200,000 low- and moderate-income people across the state each year with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities. These services and resources include: food, shelter, heating assistance, employment and training, free income tax assistance, child care, and more.

The Need

Currently, CT's CAAs employ nearly 60 certified CHWs statewide. These CAA-based CHWs are unique compared with CHWs employed by hospitals and health centers, in that they reach people who may or may not have a connection to the health care system.

CHWs are sometimes funded by time-limited grants; too often, their costs are absorbed into CAA budgets with no reimbursement. These funding mechanisms are not sustainable, nor do they allow for growth of a service that is proven to work to improve lives.

Connecticut's Department of Public Health (DPH) established a certification program for CHWs in 2019. Now, Medicaid should cover the services provided by these certified individuals.

As an interim step, federal funds should be allocated to the CAAs to support CHW work due to the high need in our communities. The American Rescue Plan Act allocates \$330 Million to Community Health Workers – and some of these funds should go to CHWs who are part of the Community Action Agency network.

Projected Outcomes

By funding the services of certified CHWs, the State can expect to achieve the following:

- More advocacy for individuals, better health care, and reduced health disparities.
- Better communication between individuals and health/social service providers & systems.
- Improved health outcomes for Medicaid (HUSKY) enrollees.

Please support sustained reimbursement of CHW services!

For more information, please contact Deb Polun at CAFCA: 860.832.9438 or deb@cafca.org.