

Agenda Item 6:

Community Health Workers, Promotores and Representatives (CHW/P/R) Initiative Update

May 29, 2025



Agenda

Purpose: Share an update on HCAI's involvement in the joint California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS), Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), and Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) CHW/P/R Workforce Initiative.

- CHW/P/R Roles Defined
- History of initiative to date
- Overview of first and second rounds of community engagements and findings
- Overview of HCAI's funding framework

CHW/P/R Roles Defined

- **Community Health Workers (CHWs):** Frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served, who connect communities with health and social services, improving access and cultural competence.
- **Promotores (Ps):** Natural leaders and neighborhood "go to" people known for servicio de corazón ("service from the heart") who primarily serve Latine and Spanish-speaking communities, sharing lived experiences and cultural ties.
- **Community Health Representatives (CHRs):** Trusted frontline public health workers rooted in community, language, and traditions essential to the spectrum of Tribal community-oriented primary health care services.
- **Other Roles:** Includes health navigators, promotores de salud, and community health advisors serving diverse populations across California.



The Impact of CHW/P/Rs

- CHW/P/Rs have long provided critical preventive, promotive, and referral services for Californian communities historically marginalized and disconnected from the health system.
- CHW/P/Rs speak various languages and serve diverse communities with diverse needs across the state.
- Recognizing the critical role of CHW/P/Rs in advancing health equity, including as exemplified by their early and essential work during COVID-19, the State of California has committed to supporting and expanding this workforce.



California's Commitment to CHW/P/Rs

The Cal HHS, HCAI, and DHCS CHW/P/R Initiative expands and supports the CHW/P/R workforce as part of [Workforce for a Healthy California](#) (Health4All).

- **June 30, 2022:** [Welfare & Inst Code Sec. 18998](#) charged HCAI with developing and implementing statewide CHW/P/R certificate program requirements.
- **July 1, 2022:** DHCS added CHW/P/R work as a [billable service to Medi-Cal](#).
- **July 1, 2023:** Following a first-round nine-month community engagement and in line with statutory requirements, HCAI issued a guidance letter proposing statewide certificate program requirements.
- **Nov. 2023:** In response to stakeholder input, CalHHS, HCAI, and DHCS paused the guidance for additional feedback.
- **Feb. – Nov. 2024:** Conducted a second round of community engagement and convened an ad hoc advisory group to re-examine workforce needs.
- **Dec. 2024:** Established the formal Advisory Workgroup, a majority active CHW/P/R body to provide input for plans for state funding and policy recommendations.



First Round Community Engagement Overview and Findings (2022 – 2023)

Participants and Purpose: Engaged 1,500+ stakeholders across 43 sessions to shape a CHW/P/R certificate model grounded in equity and accessibility.

Key Objectives:

- Understand priorities and barriers to certification.
- Validate key components (training, experience, competencies).
- Build trust through transparent, responsive engagement

Key Feedback:

- **Core Competencies:** Strong support for C3 standards.
- **Lived Experience:** Self-attestation must be accessible.
- **Barriers:** Remove obstacles (language, education, cost, citizenship).
- **Training Pathway:** Support for 80 training hours + 10 field hours.
- **Experience Pathway:** 500 hours accepted; mixed views on 2029 sunset.

Overall: Balance rigor and accessibility.

Outcome: Stakeholders called for an inclusive certification model that empowers CHW/P/Rs.



State-Issued CHW Certificate Guidance Letter Components

[Guidance Letter \(July 1, 2023\)](#) Key Components

- **Certification Pathways:**
 - **Experience Pathway:** CHWs with prior CHW/P/R experience.
 - **Training Pathway:** Requires 80 hours of training, including 10 hours of fieldwork.
- **Core Competencies:** Based on **C3 Project** standards (e.g., communication, advocacy, outreach).
- **Renewal:** Every 2 years with 6 hours of annual continuing education.
- **Specialty Certificates:** Optional, focusing on targeted health or community needs.



Second Round Community Engagement Overview and Findings (2024)

Participants and Purpose: Conducted statewide community dialogues by engaging 680+ participants across 23 sessions hosted by 20 organizations and convened an ad hoc advisory group to re-examine workforce needs.

Feedback on State-Wide Certificate

- Mixed views on state-wide certificate:
 - Seen as a path to legitimacy, standardization, and funding.
 - Concerns about excluding experienced workers, undermining community-rooted models, or duplicating existing credentials.
- CHW/P/Rs were open to certification if community-based, honors lived experience, culturally relevant, multilingual, peer-led, and accessible.

Top Workforce Needs that Dialogue Respondents Identified:

- Sustainable funding and pay equity.
- Wrap-around supports (e.g., childcare, travel).
- Professional development opportunities, including regional and specialty trainings (e.g., behavioral health, disability services, street medicine, climate change).

Ad Hoc Workgroup Insights:

- There is confusion around the Medi-Cal CHW benefit; DHCS provides technical assistance and support.
- Prioritize training program accreditation over individual certification as a more inclusive and practical approach.



FY 24-25 Budget and Advisory Input

- The Budget Act of 2024 reduced nearly all of the original CHW/P/R workforce budget allocation, eliminating resources for implementing an ongoing statewide certificate function.
- ~\$13M in one-time funds remain for the CHW/P/R Initiative.
- HCAI used community dialogue findings and advisory input to develop a funding framework.
- In December 2024, HCAI developed a funding framework, presented it to the ad hoc and formal advisory work groups, and refined it to reflect feedback and ensure that proposed investments were most relevant and impactful.

Funding Framework: 4 Strategic Pillars (1/2)

Pillar 1 – Immigrant Community Health and Resilience – This investment aims to help immigrant and mixed-status communities stay safe, healthy, and supported. CHW/P/Rs are trusted community members. They help families find health care, link families to behavioral health support and social services, and educate them about their rights. Their work is essential because many immigrant families face fear, stress, and challenges in getting the help they need, and CHW/P/Rs can help see and support the whole person, family and community.

Pillar 2 – CHW/P/R Organization and Workforce Investment Grants – Invest in the Amplifying Impact Initiative (initially funded by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) to provide technical assistance and direct support to CHW organizations for Medi-Cal billing infrastructure, direct workforce support, and training content development.





Funding Framework: 4 Strategic Pillars (2/2)

Pillar 3 – CHW/P/R Training Program Resources – Develop resources to ensure consistency in CHW/P/R training programs, aligned with the DHCS CHW Benefit.

Pillar 4 – CHW/P/R Training Program Accreditation Blueprint – Create an accreditation blueprint that outlines the process, roles, costs, and timeline for developing accreditation for CHW/P/R training programs.

The Path Forward

- **Shift in Strategy:**
Due to limited budget availability, HCAI will not move forward with a statewide certificate.
- **Funding Progress:**
All four pillars are in the early stages of development. HCAI anticipates:
 - Funding Pillar 1 (Immigrant Community Health and Resilience) and Pillar 2 (CHW/P/R Organization and Workforce Investment Grants) in Q3 2025
 - CHW/P/R training program toolkit (Pillar 3) and accreditation blueprint (Pillar 4) by the end of the year.



Expanding and supporting the CHW/P/R workforce together!

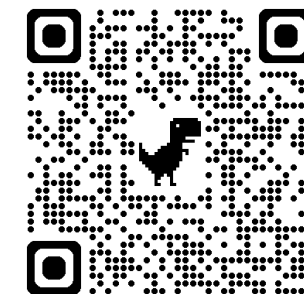
Contact Us

Email:

CHW@hcai.ca.gov

Web:

[Click Here](#)
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A photograph of a wooden desk. On the desk is a spiral-bound notebook with the words "Thank You.." written in cursive. Next to the notebook are a pair of black-rimmed glasses, a small succulent in a clear glass container, and a larger green plant in a black pot. A blue and white pen lies on the notebook.

Thank You..