



[CHW \(mnchwalliance.org\)](http://mnchwalliance.org)

February 14, 2022

Chair Utke and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance (Alliance), I am writing to you to express our support for the Community Health Worker (CHW) line item in the Governor's Supplemental Budget to educate, strengthen, equip, evaluate, and grow the CHW Workforce.

CHWs are the health equity workforce. Many CHWs represent BIPOC communities. They come from the communities they serve and are an investment in those communities. Research indicates that CHWs show a return on investment of at least three dollars for every dollar invested in them. They serve as liaisons between health care, social service systems, and communities. They also work in other systems such as public safety, public schools, childcare, elder services and many more.

Community Health Workers work in collaboration with Physicians, Nurses, Case Managers, Social Workers, Care Coordinators, and other licensed professionals. They fill gaps, address the social determinants of health, and provide the support needed so others on the health care team can work at the top of their licenses. CHWs will help grow and diversify Minnesota's health care and public health workforce, now facing serious shortages and enormous stress.

CHWs are uniquely positioned to improve health outcomes and health equity within our state. This funding will lead to increased healthcare access, lower healthcare costs and improved health outcomes for your constituents facing health inequities and barriers to care. Additionally, this bill will further support and grow the CHW workforce.

Funding will further support and grow the CHW workforce through educational pathways. Educational institutions could recruit and educate CHW students from BIPOC and other underserved communities and enter living wage jobs. This critical, multi-year state support coupled with the leadership of the Alliance and our partners will provide the resources to develop hiring and workforce implementation models, sustainable financing, and measurably improve health equity and outcomes for all Minnesotans.

We are excited about the funding for CHWs in the Governor's Budget and look forward to working with this committee as you consider a supplemental budget bill. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Weick".

Minnesota Community Health Worker Alliance Board Chair