IDPH
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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Illinois Community Health Workers Review Board

Fourth Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly Reporting Year 2025-2026

I. Legislative Mandate for Community Health Workers Review Board

The Illinois Community Health Workers Review Board was established by the Community Health Worker Certification and Reimbursement Act (410 ILCS 67) to advise the Illinois Department of Public Health when developing the Illinois Community Health Worker (CHW) Certification Program. The board is responsible for: 1) developing rules for certifying individuals, including those using the work experience pathway and completing academic and community-based training programs; 2) recommending standards and reviewing proposed regulations; and 3) providing feedback about training programs and reimbursement schedules.

In accordance with the Act, the Board submits an annual report on the program's progress to the Office of the Governor and the General Assembly. The Illinois Community Health Workers Certification Board is required to submit its first annual report one year after the Board's initial meeting and annually thereafter for as long as the Board remains active.

II. Membership

The Illinois Community Health Worker Review Board membership is established in accordance with the Community Health Worker Certification and Reimbursement Act and includes representatives from state agencies, direct legislative appointments, statewide CHW associations, educational institutions, CHW employers, community members and the CHW workforce.

Current membership during the reporting period included:

Co-Chairs:

- Janice Phillips, Ph.D., RN, CENP, FAAN, IDPH Assistant Director
- Wandy Hernandez, Co-Executive Director, Illinois Community Health Worker Association

Legislative Appointments:

- A member from the Office of the Governor appointed by the governor:
  - Ryan Croke, First Assistant Deputy Governor for Health and Human Services
- Three members appointed by the Senate president:
  - Monica Cuevas Nava, Health Center Supervisor of Community Health Workers and Community Outreach, Pillars Community Health
  - Angela Ellison, Senior Director, Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships (OCEAN-HP)
  - There is one vacancy
- A member appointed by the Senate minority leader:
  - There is one vacancy
- Three members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives:
  - Representative Camille Lilly
  - There are two vacancies
- A member appointed by the House of Representatives minority leader:
  - Representative William Hauter

State Agency Representatives

- Director of Illinois Department of Public Health or their designee:
  - Lubia Nunez-Montelongo, Manager of Community Public Health Outreach
- Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (IHFS) or their designee:
  - Kristin Hartsaw, HFS Special Assistant to the Director, Medical Policy
- Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) or their designee:
  - Ricardo Anderson, Ph.D., CRSS, IDHS Mental Health Recovery Specialist, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery
- Secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) or their designee:
  - Shami Goyal, MD, MMM, CPE, FAAFP, IDFPR Chief Medical Coordinator

CHW Association Representatives

- A member from a Statewide Association of Community Health Workers appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives:
  - Leticia Boughton Price, Co-Executive Director, Illinois Community Health Workers Association
- A member from a Statewide Association of Community Health Workers appointed by the speaker of the Senate President:
  - Noelle Moore, Member, Illinois Community Health Workers Association

Workforce, Employer and Education Representatives

As appointed by the IDPH director, in addition to the members specified in this subsection, the board has balanced representation from the:

- CHW workforce:
  - Emma Villareal, Community Health Worker
  - Kevin Harris, Community Health Worker
- CHW employer:
  - Tracey Smith, Director of Community Health, Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA)
  - Ashley Colwell, Vice President of Clinical Services + Workforce Development, Illinois Primary Health Care Association (IPHCA)
- CHW training and educational institutions:
  - David Sanders, President, Malcolm X College
  - There is one vacancy
- Community members who are recipients of services:
  - There are two vacancies

The CHW Review Board also recognized the passing of Esther Sciammarella, Executive Director of the Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition, during this reporting period and honors her service and contributions to advancing the Community Health Worker workforce in Illinois.

III. CHW Review Board Meetings

In its fourth year, the CHW Review Board continued to meet on a bi-monthly basis to provide guidance and recommendations related to the implementation of the CHW certification program. Full Board meetings were held on the following dates:

- October 10, 2025
- December 12, 2025
- February 13, 2026
- April 17, 2026
- June 12, 2026
- August 14, 2026

In addition to the full Board meetings, the Board convened an ad hoc Materials Review Committee. The committee met periodically to review and provide recommendations regarding public-facing materials as well as the program's curriculum resources, application process, administrative portal and other program tools. Meetings were held on the following dates:

- October 30, 2025
- November 7, 2025
- December 16, 2025
- February 26, 2026
- April 15, 2026

IV. Board Activities

Governance and Rulemaking

- Finalized administrative rules recommendations for the CHW Certification Program and submitted to the State Board of Health: June 2025
    - Subpart A: Definitions
    - Subpart B: Role of the Board
    - Subpart C: Community Health Worker Certification
    - Subpart D: Training Program Requirements
    - Subpart E: Registry
    - Subpart F: Training Program Curricula and Instructor Requirements
    - Subpart G: Continuing Education
- Proposed Administrative Rules approved by the State Board of Health: September 2025
- Proposed Administrative Rules were submitted to the Secretary of State and the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) for review and approval
    - First Notice Period: October 3rd - November 17th
        - Proposed rules were posted in the Illinois Register for public comment.
        - IDPH reviewed and addressed public comments and amended the proposed rules as needed.
        - At the close of the reporting period, IDPH prepared for Second Notice, which included resubmission of revised proposed rules to JCAR following updates made in response to public comment.

Program Development and Operational Readiness

- Extended work orders under intergovernmental agreements with two state university partners:
    - Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) to:
        - Assist in developing and managing CHW applications.
        - Extend subcontract with Breakthrough Technologies to continue development of the IT platform for the CHW Certification Program.
    - UIC Cancer Center to:
        - Assist in developing and managing CHW Training Program applications.
        - Extend subcontract with Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI) to finalize curriculum including CHW refresher course, CHW instructor course, and CHW supervisor course.
- Developed internal Standard Operating Procedures drafts for the CHW Certification Program to manage key aspects of program operations.

Interagency Collaboration

- Continued collaboration with the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (IHFS), including participation in an informal IHFS workgroup to provide input on the development of the Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA).

- IHFS submitted the Medicaid SPA to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for review and approval.
- Continued collaboration with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) regarding development of CHW academic training program requirements and program promotion.
- Coordinated with the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) to obtain information related to certification renewal processes, continuing education documentation, and provider registry considerations.

Outreach & Stakeholder Engagement

- Renewed grant funding with the Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA) to support the promotion and advancement of the CHW workforce in the state.
    - IPHA enlisted partners to serve as Anchor Organizations and Community Ambassador Organizations to support efforts in strengthening and sustaining the Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce across Illinois.
        - Anchor Organizations:
            1. Provide training and technical assistance to community ambassador organizations, based on guidance and training provided by IPHA; and
            2. Assist with data collection, support community engagement, and work to promote CHW certification and policy advocacy.
        - Community Ambassador Organizations:
            1. Recruit and engage local employers to integrate CHW positions into their workforce,
            2. Conduct readiness assessments to prepare employers for CHW integration; and
            3. Recruit and guide community members to CHW training and certification.
    - IPHA subcontracted with Morreale Communications to develop and implement a phased statewide communications campaign focused on increasing awareness, visibility, and recruitment for Community Health Workers (CHWs) across Illinois.
        - This campaign is intended to strengthen public understanding of the CHW role, promote certification opportunities, drive interest in CHW training and employment pathways, and support employer demand for CHWs as an essential part of the healthcare and public health workforce.
        - These efforts also help improve access to care, build trust, and support better health outcomes for underserved communities, reflecting the core impact of CHWs.
- Staff presented program updates at numerous events including CHW summits, conferences, and meetings including:

- September 8, 2025: Local Health Department Public Information Officers Meeting
- September 10–11, 2025: IPHA 84th Annual Public Health Workforce Conference (Bloomington-Normal)
- September 17, 2025: Local Health Department Public Information Officers Meeting
- October 17, 2025: 3rd Annual Illinois Community Health Workers Association (ILCHWA) Summit (Oak Lawn)
- December 11, 2025: Illinois Public Health Association CHW Section Meeting
- January 6, 2026: Local Health Department Public Information Officers Meeting
- January 23, 2026: 3rd Annual Illinois Community Health Workers Association (ILCHWA) Summit (Champaign)
- March 12, 2026: Illinois Public Health Association CHW Section Meeting
- April 23, 2026: Health Equity Data Summit (Glendale)
- June 8, 2026: Local Health Department Administrators
- June 24, 2026: Illinois State Board of Education
- July 15, 2026: CHW Certification and Reimbursement Workshop (ILCHWA)

Program Infrastructure & Data Management

- In partnership with SIUC and Breakthrough Technologies, the CHW Certification Program Learning Management System (LMS) and program platform were developed to support program administration, including electronic applications and processing, electronic communications with applicants, profile creation for each applicant, CHW and training program registries, and data management and reporting. It also includes an LMS for required courses and a resource library. User Acceptance Testing for the CHW Application and Training Program platform was conducted to determine usability and verify that the system works as intended.
  - Stakeholders used real-world scenarios to test key aspects of the platform, workflows, and functionality.
  - Feedback gathered during testing activities was incorporated to improve platform functionality and user experience.

V. Strategic Priorities and Next Steps

IDPH's CHW Certification Program Launch

- Continue monitoring the administrative rules process through the JCAR review and approval process.
- Continue collaboration with SIUC and Breakthrough Technologies to finalize platform development and implement application workflows.
- Continue working with UIC and SUHI to complete curriculum deliverables, including development of a new CHW supervisor training course and implementation of training program application processes.

- Continue collaboration with the IPHA to promote and advance the CHW workforce and support integration of CHWs into healthcare and public health teams statewide.
- Continue the development and refinement of program SOPs.
- Continue working with ISBE to develop the High School Training Program Pilot anticipated for implementation in Fall 2027.