

# Regional Accountable Health Councils: Program Updates

February 2023

## Upcoming Council Meetings

The following Quarterly Regional Accountable Health Council (RAHC) meetings will take place in March. During these meetings, the RAHCs will review program status, next steps, and pilot intervention development. Council meetings are open to the public.

### Lehigh-Capital Quarterly Council Meeting

Monday, March 13, 4PM-4:30PM

[Link to meeting](#)

### Northwest Quarterly Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 14, 4PM-4:30PM

[Link to meeting](#)

### Northeast Quarterly Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 9AM-9:30AM

[Link to meeting](#)

### Southeast Quarterly Council Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 9AM-10AM

[Link to meeting](#)

### Southwest Quarterly Council Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 4PM-4:30PM

[Link to meeting](#)

To engage in a RAHC please use one of the following forms:

[Expression of Interest Form](#)

[Consumer Feedback Form](#)



## Pennsylvania's 2023 Health Equity Conference

General admission [registration](#) for the 2023 Health Equity Conference hosted by Pennsylvania Department of Health's Office of Health Equity is now open!

Join the Office of Health Equity for a day of expert speakers as they provide valuable insight on health equity, whole person care, and chronic disease prevention. The conference will be held on **April 4, 2023, from 9am until 3pm and is entirely virtual**. Hear from our keynote speakers before heading into a breakout room of your choice to get more in-depth information on a variety of health equity related topics. Registration is open until April 3, so don't miss out on an opportunity to connect with others in the field from the comfort of your own home.

Questions about this year's summit? Please contact Judelissa Rosario, [jurosario@pa.gov](mailto:jurosario@pa.gov), or Emily Lebo, [c\\_elebo@pa.gov](mailto:c_elebo@pa.gov), for support.

We hope to see you there!

# PA CHW Collaborative Sustainability Committee

## *Working toward a sustainable CHW model across Pennsylvania*

The **PA Community Health Worker (CHW) Collaborative Sustainability Committee**, consisting of over 50% CHW membership, has just launched the [2023 CHW Employer Survey](#) to evaluate the current state of CHW financing and employment across Pennsylvania. Thank you for ensuring that your organization is represented in the findings. Results will be used to support and inform the development of sustainable financing solutions for CHWs in PA.

### What is a Community Health Worker (CHW)?

**“As a Community Health Worker, the people I see open up to me when I tell them I’ve been in your shoes, I know what you’re going through. Look at me – I’m a perfect example that it works.”**

- Carol Bibbens, Certified Community Health Worker, AHN Center for Inclusion Health

According to the American Public Health Association, *A community health worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.*

*A community health worker also builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy.*

CHWs advocate for services to meet community needs and empower individuals and communities to advocate for their health by:

- Providing culturally appropriate health education and information
- Providing care coordination, case management, and system navigation
- Providing coaching and social support
- Advocating for individuals and communities
- Building individual and community capacity
- Providing direct service
- Implementing individual and community assessments
- Conducting outreach



### For RAHC program support contact:

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Voluntary CHW certification was established through the PA Certification Board in 2020. As of September 2022, there are 555 certified CHWs in PA and even more CHWs that are not (or not yet) certified.

## Sustainable Financing for CHWs in PA

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are currently not reimbursable through the Medicaid fee schedule in Pennsylvania (PA). Despite strong evidence of the CHW role in addressing health inequities, improving health outcomes, and reducing healthcare spending, the sustainability of the CHW role in Pennsylvania (PA) remains at risk without a long-term financing structure. In the spring of 2022, the PA CHW Collaborative conducted the PA CHW Employer survey. Respondents represent 78 CHW employers and 440 CHWs in PA, including FQHCs and medical clinics (37%), CBOs (26%), and health systems (23%), collectively serving all 67 counties in the Commonwealth. Fifty-eight percent of respondents identified short-term grants (3 years or less) as the top CHW financing source, including philanthropic grants (22%), federal grants (21%), and state grants (15%). While Physical Health Managed Care Organizations (PH-MCOs) have latitude to incorporate CHWs through the PA HealthChoices Community Based Care Management program, only 13% of CHW positions represented in the survey are currently financed through PH-MCO contracts.

CHWs and allies from the PA CHW Collaborative and PA CHW Association developed the [Sustainable Financing for CHWs in PA brief](#) outlining the background, survey results, and recommendations for long-term financing solutions in PA. This development led to the PA CHW Collaborative's current engagement with state legislators and state officials to advocate for sustainable financing for CHWs through the Medicaid fee schedule and through PH-MCO contracts.

### More Information

To read the *Sustainable Financing for CHWs in PA* brief and view the 2022 survey results, visit <https://www.pachw.org/sustainability>. To learn more about current efforts or join the PA CHW Collaborative Sustainability Committee, email [Kristin.Lazzara@ahn.org](mailto:Kristin.Lazzara@ahn.org).

### To learn more about CHW financing in the U.S:

Kaiser Family Foundation (2023). ["State Policies for Expanding Medicaid Coverage of Community Health Worker \(CHW\) Services."](#)  
Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (2022). ["Medicaid Coverage of Community Health Worker Services."](#)  
National Association of Community Health Workers (2020). ["Sustainable Financing of Community Health Worker Employment."](#)  
National Association of State Health Policy (2022). ["State Approaches to Community Health Worker Financing through Medicaid State Plan Amendments."](#)

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