

May 11, 2026

Letter of Support for House Resolution H8211 – Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$10,000,000 to the Rhode Island Department of Health Community Health Worker Initiative

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

I write in support of House Resolution H8211, the Joint Resolution authorizing the appropriation of \$10,000,000 to the Rhode Island Department of Health Community Health Worker (CHW) Initiative. Community Health Workers are frontline public health professionals who serve as trusted bridges between underserved communities and the health and social services those communities need. Investing in the CHW workforce is a proven, cost-effective strategy for reducing health disparities, improving health outcomes, and advancing health equity across Rhode Island.

This resolution calls for Community Health Workers to be hired with this appropriation and be deployed at our public libraries. Public libraries are uniquely positioned to extend the reach of the CHW initiative: they are trusted community anchors and already serve as places where residents seek information and assistance with health and social services.

I also respectfully ask that a dedicated portion of the appropriated funds be directed toward administrative support for Rhode Island's public libraries to assist in delivering and sustaining the CHW program.

Integrating public libraries as administrative partners in the CHW program represents a high-impact, low-cost approach to broadening community reach and strengthening program infrastructure. Libraries already serve the very populations the CHW Initiative is designed to support, and dedicated funding would allow our libraries to do so in a sustained, coordinated, and equitable manner.

The Cranston Public Library has a history of supporting health-related initiatives from being a founding member of the OneCranston Health Equity Zone to our Healthy Families initiative funded by the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM). We would welcome a dedicated CHW onsite through this program.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Garcia
Library Director
Cranston Public Library