



SAVING HOPES HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER.

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Who are you and why are you submitting a testimony?

My name is Candelaria Martínez, and I am a dedicated Community Health Worker (CHW). I am submitting this testimony to bring greater awareness to the essential role CHWs play in improving public health and ensuring that underserved populations receive the care, information, and support they need. Our work is often invisible, but deeply impactful.

What do you do in your role as a Community Health Worker & what does it mean?

As a CHW, I serve as a trusted liaison between the healthcare system and the community. My role involves educating individuals about their health, helping them navigate medical systems, connecting them with resources, and providing emotional and social support. I approach my work with empathy, cultural sensitivity, and an unwavering commitment to those I serve.

Being a CHW is more than a profession—it is a calling. It means advocating for those whose voices are often unheard and standing with them through difficult times. It is the privilege of walking alongside individuals and families on their journey to better health and reminding them that they are not alone.

Share the importance of this legislation:

Legislation that formally supports Community Health Workers is crucial. It provides the recognition, structure, and stability our profession needs. Standardized training, sustainable funding, fair compensation, and integration into healthcare teams are not just necessary for CHWs—they are necessary for the communities we serve.

This legislation would strengthen our capacity to serve long-term and more effectively. It promotes health equity by empowering CHWs to address not only medical needs, but also the social determinants of health—such as food, housing, education, and access to services. It ensures that those who often fall through the cracks are seen, supported, and valued.

Share a brief story about your impactful work as a CHW:

One of the most meaningful experiences in my work has been supporting a single mother who had recently experienced homelessness. When she first arrived at the shelter, she was in a vulnerable state—without access to healthcare, housing, or consistent nutrition. She was also recently diagnosed with a chronic condition and felt overwhelmed and hopeless.

As a Community Health Worker, I walked beside her from the beginning. I helped her access medical care, manage her medications, attend regular doctor's appointments, and connect with local services. Over time, and with ongoing support, she was able to secure stable housing, access nutritious food, and receive the healthcare she urgently needed.

Today, her quality of life has improved significantly. She told me recently, "For the first time in a long time, I feel safe, seen, and cared for." Witnessing her regain her dignity and her basic rights—health, housing, and food—has been one of the most powerful reminders of why CHWs are essential. We don't just guide people—we walk with them until they are able to stand strong on their own.