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House Committee on Health & Human Services  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for House Bill 2025 – H 6117: Requiring Private Insurance Coverage for Community Health Worker Services**

Dear Chairperson Donovan and Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services,

On behalf of Clínica Esperanza/Hope Clinic (CEHC), I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2025 – H 6117, which would require private health insurers in Rhode Island to reimburse services delivered by certified Community Health Workers (CHWs). Located in Olneyville, CEHC is a free healthcare clinic that has been providing 100% free healthcare to uninsured Rhode Islanders since 2007.

As Executive Director at CEHC, I have seen firsthand the transformative impact and role that CHWs play in improving health outcomes, especially among underserved and uninsured populations. **CHWs serve as trusted liaisons between individuals and the health care system.** They help patients navigate complex care systems, provide culturally appropriate health education, connect families to vital resources, and play a pivotal role in managing chronic conditions and reducing unnecessary emergency room visits.

**The data on CHW effectiveness is clear: studies have shown that CHWs improve patient outcomes, reduce emergency room visits, and contribute to significant health care savings.** For example, research published in *Health Affairs* found that for every dollar invested in CHWs, there can be a return of \$2.47 due to reductions in emergency department visits and inpatient admissions. These savings benefit a wide array of health



care stakeholders, including hospitals, insurers, and taxpayers—by preventing costly complications and keeping patients healthier in their communities.

Reimbursing CHWs through private insurance is not just a matter of fairness or recognition; it is a fiscally responsible move. **It provides a sustainable revenue source for health care organizations to integrate CHWs into their care models.** And by expanding access to CHW services, **we can improve health outcomes across populations while simultaneously reducing avoidable costs in the health system.**

At CEHC, we can point to real-world results. Our peer-led *Vida Sana* healthy lifestyle program—driven by CHWs—has earned preliminary recognition by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for its success in improving blood pressure among participants. Additionally, CEHC has been recognized by the American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) for our commitment to measurement accuracy and achieving a blood pressure control rate of over 70% among our adult patient population. **These outcomes were made possible by our CHW-driven model of care.**

**We urge the committee to pass H 6117 to help Rhode Island fully embrace a model of care that is community-centered, cost-effective, and proven to work.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Leonard MPA  
Executive Director  
Clínica Esperanza/Hope Clinic