

House Health & Human Services Committee  
Certified Community Health Worker  
Progreso Latino  
April 10, 2025

Chairperson,

My name is Nicole Espinal, and I am a Certified Community Health Worker with Progreso Latino, where I have proudly served for the past year and a half. I am writing today to express my strong support for H6117/S0705, which would require commercial insurers to reimburse for Community Health Worker services.

As part of my role at Progreso Latino, I serve as a Certified CHW working directly with families in an outpatient setting through the Mi Gente program, which is affiliated with Brown University Health. In this program, I contribute to an ongoing research study that aims to demonstrate the positive impact of integrating CHWs into outpatient mental health care settings. My work is focused on rebuilding trust in healthcare systems, connecting Latinx families to essential resources, and addressing barriers related to social determinants of health such as food, housing, education, and healthcare. I support caregivers of adolescents with mood disorders and suicidal ideation by helping them navigate resources to meet their basic needs and providing psychoeducation to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

Much of my work focuses on supporting immigrant families, low-income individuals, and those with complex social needs—communities that have been historically underserved and have faced barriers to adequate care. CHWs are essential in bridging gaps between clinical care and community-based support. However, our reach is often limited because only Medicaid reimburses for our work. Without reliable funding through commercial insurers, our positions are at risk, and we must rely on grants or donations to sustain our roles.

I recently worked with a family whose adolescent had significant mental health needs, while the caregivers were overwhelmed by their own challenges. By building trust and offering wraparound support—connecting them with public assistance and culturally appropriate resources—I helped them prioritize their child's care, allowing them to fully engage in the treatment plan without worrying about their basic needs. Without this support, they would not have been able to fully commit to their child's well-being and healing process.

I urge you to pass H6117/S0705 and ensure that CHWs can be sustainably funded through commercial insurance reimbursement. This bill would validate the importance of our work and help us reach more families who urgently need support.

Thank you for your time and commitment to public service.

Sincerely,

Nicole Espinal, CCHW  
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