

Massachusetts Community Health Workers Score Legislative Victory!

The Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers (MACHW), on behalf of CHWs in Massachusetts, has successfully integrated our first CHW authored legislation into comprehensive healthcare reform bills. The MA State Senate and the House of Representatives health care reform bills aim to ensure insurance coverage and access to care for all Massachusetts residents. Each version includes sections on CHWs and outreach, as well as amendments that strengthen the role of CHWs in increasing healthcare access, reducing health disparities and enhancing community wellness.

To View the legislation visit <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw06/sl060058.htm>

CHW Bill Progress

November 2004

- CHWs draft legislation with technical assistance from the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA).
- MA Representative Gloria Fox agrees to become the bill's Lead Sponsor. Additional legislators sign on as co-sponsors.

December 2004

- Bill reviewed by Massachusetts House of Representatives' legal team.
- Bill filed on behalf of MACHW by Representative Fox. The "CHW Bill" was initially filed as House #2751 – "An Act Providing for Investigation and Study by the Department of Public Health Relative To Community Health Workers."

June 2005

- Bill has hearing in the Joint Committee on Public Health (committee consist of members of both the House and Senate).
- Bill reported out favorably from the Joint Committee on Public Health.
- Bill sent to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.

September 2005

- MACHW leadership and the Executive Director of MPHA meet with Representative Patricia Walrath, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing.
- MACHW leadership informed there is movement to integrate the bill into a comprehensive, progressive healthcare reform bill being designed.

October 2005

- MA Speaker of the House Salvador DiMasi unveils health care reform bill, House # 4463. The CHW bill is included in full.

November 2005

- State Representatives, on behalf of MACHW, file amendments to House #4463 to strengthen CHW language and to include CHW representation on the Public Health Council.
- MA House of Representatives votes overwhelmingly to pass House health care reform bill.
- Senators, on behalf of MACHW, file amendments to Senate #2042 to strengthen CHW language and to include CHW representation on the Public Health Council.
- MA Senate passes Senate health care reform bill, Senate #2042, also containing CHW language, which is slightly different.
- Both the House and Senate versions sent to Joint Conference Committee for compromise to integrate the two bills.

March 2006

- Health care reform leaves conference committee.
- Both the MA senate and the MA House of Representatives vote in favor of the bill.

April 2006

- Bill signed, approved in part by Governor Mitt Romney and becomes Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006.

May 2006

- Legislature overrides Governor's vetoes