

Community Health Workers Review Board

Meeting April 17, 2026

2:00 – 4:00pm

Meeting can be viewed [HERE](#)

1. Call to Order

- Dr. Janice Phillips called the meeting to order. Meeting recorded for documentation purposes.
- **CHW Review Board Members Present:** Dr. Janice Phillips, Wandy Hernandez, Lubia Suterwala, Kristin Hartsaw, Ricardo Anderson, Dr. Shami Goyal, Rep. Bill Hauter, Leticia Boughton Price, Noelle Moore, Emma Villarreal, Tracy Smith, Rep. Camille Lilly, and Ryan Croke.
- **CHW Review Board Members Absent:** Angela Ellison, Ashley Colwell, Monica Cuevas Nava, and David Sanders.
- **IDPH Staff Present:** Sarahjini Nunn, Marcella Kincaid, Lori Weiselberg, Patricia Montalvo, Allison Nickrent, Dr. Janice Phillips, Rosario Escalera
- **Other Guest Present:** Nancy Barriga, Interprenet; Leslie Carnahan, Judith Sayad, Melissa Werner, Brenda Soto, Paula Allen-Meares, University of Illinois Chicago(UIC); Deandre Love, Southern Illinois University school of Medicine(SIU); Janelle Trier, Caitlin Burke, OSF Healthcare; Cealisa Johnson, EB York, University of Chicago Medicine; Lacey Johnson, Erie Family Health Center; Nicole Milano, Metropolitan Healthcare Council (MHC Chicago); Jennifer Schindl, Shawnee Health Service & Development Corp; Bonnie Ewald, Rush University; Kelci Osborn, Illinois Public Health Association(IPHA); Nyree Modisett, Estrelitta Harmon, Center for Better Aging; Sherland Brooks, Diversity Sourcing; Laren Polite, Aetna; Susan Diewald; Adam Scheffler and Freddy Gonzalez.

2. Recognizing Esther Sciammarella

- Wandy Hernandez, Co-Chair, reflected on Esther as a beloved colleague, mentor, and “big sister” to many. Highlighted her impact within the Latino community and CHW workforce. Described her as a force of leadership, unity, and compassion. Wandy emphasized Esther’s unwavering commitment and passion, which touched countless lives and noted her legacy of uplifting others through warmth, wisdom, and advocacy.
- **Dr. Janice Phillips:** Acknowledged Esther’s contributions to both the CHW Review Board and the State Board of Health. She described her as a strong advocate for marginalized communities across the Chicagoland area and noted her presence as impactful and inspiring.
- **Emma Villarreal:** Expressed appreciation for Esther and shared intention to attend the memorial services in support of her family.
- **Lori Weiselberg:** Reflected on Esther’s strong voice during administrative rule discussions and noted her commitment and willingness to speak candidly and consistently advocate for key issues.

3. Vote to Approve Meeting Minutes

- February 13, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes

- Moved by Emma Villarreal
- Seconded by Ricardo Anderson, *Motion passed.*

- February 26, 2026, Materials Review Committee Meeting Minutes
 - Moved by Noelle Moore
 - Seconded by Leticia Boughton Price, *Motion passed.*

4. Board Process Decisions and Reminders

- Dr. Janice Phillips reminded Board Members and guests of the mission of the Review Board and protocols for being recognized to speak, public comment period, and Board member attendance.

5. Public Comment Period

- No public comment

6. Materials Review Committee Report (February Mtg)

Janice Phillips provided a summary of the Materials Review Committee's work, noting that the Committee began reviewing the CHW Refresher Course in February and completed its review earlier in the week. She also shared that the Committee previously reviewed the Model Curriculum and Assessment Toolkit. Overall, the feedback was positive. The Committee commended the UIC and SIU teams for their efforts in developing the curriculum. Dr. Phillips indicated that the Committee may be reconvened in the future to review additional public-facing materials as needed and express appreciation for the members' contributions and engagement.

7. HFS Update

Kristin Hartsaw, Special Assistant to the Director, Medical Policy
Illinois Department of Health and Family Services

- HFS is continuing planning efforts related to Medicaid reimbursement for certified Community Health Workers (CHWs)
- The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and HFS are working closely in coordination and aligning timelines and implementation efforts.
- Kristin emphasized that certification is a critical prerequisite, and reimbursement will be tied specifically to certified CHWs
- HFS has initiated the formal process to file a Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA). A public notice was posted on the HFS website indicating intent to cover CHW services. This public notice represents the first required step in the federal SPA submission process. It provides an opportunity for public input and stakeholder feedback. The notice is accessible via:
 - HFS website
 - Information Center
 - Public Notices
- HFS routinely posts public notices when introducing new Medicaid covered services and adjusting reimbursement rates.
- All submitted public comments will be documented and posted publicly and will become part of the official record. Supportive comments are encouraged, as they demonstrate statewide backing to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). All comments are received including

questions or concerns.

- HFS plans to submit the SPA by the end of April 2026 or early May 2026. The requested effective date for the SPA is July 1, 2026.
 - Even if the SPA is approved and effective July 1, Medicaid reimbursement cannot occur until CHWs are certified as defined in Illinois State statute. There is also a strict condition for billing eligibility. Organizations will not be able to bill Medicaid for CHW services until certified CHWs are available in the workforce.
- HFS has convened an informal CHW stakeholder workgroup, which includes: CHWs program.

8. Administrative Rule Status Update

Lori Weiselberg, IDPH

- Lori Weiselberg provided an update on the administrative rules for the CHW Certification Program. She reported that IDPH is currently reviewing public comments received during First Notice, making revisions to the rules as needed, and preparing for Second Notice submission to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). She explained that the next steps in the rulemaking process include submission of the revised rules to JCAR, JCAR review and potential stakeholder engagement, resolution of any outstanding issues, final rule adoption by IDPH, and program launch. Lori noted that IDPH continues to target a mid- to late-2026 program launch; however, some elements of the timeline remain outside of IDPH control, particularly during the JCAR review process. She added that the overall goal remains alignment between certification rollout and Medicaid reimbursement.

9. Training Program Focus

Lori Weiselberg, IDPH

- Lori Weiselberg provided updates related to training program development activities, including User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for the training program application, ongoing collaboration with academic state partners, and outreach efforts to prospective training programs. She also shared information regarding “Coming Soon” flyers developed to promote awareness and preparation for participation in the CHW Certification Program.

10. CHW Pilot Recruitment

Sarahjini Nunn, IDPH

- Sarahjini Nunn provided an overview of the CHW pilot recruitment process, including the planned approach for recruiting CHWs to participate in the pilot phase of the certification program. She also discussed the Board’s role in supporting outreach efforts and sharing information regarding the pilot opportunity with community partners and potential applicants.

11. Sequencing for a Phased Launch

Sarahjini Nunn, IDPH

- The anticipated launch sequence was outlined beginning with JCAR approval and followed by a pilot phase lasting up to 60 days. During the pilot, the website will be made available to allow prospective applicants to review requirements and prepare materials. Upon completion of the pilot and all updates are made, the application will open fully to the public.

12. Second Public Comment Period

- No public comment

13. Schedule of Board Meetings and Announcements

- Full Board Meetings
 - Friday, June 12, 2026, 2pm –4pm
 - Friday, August 14, 2026, 2pm –4pm
 - Friday, October 16, 2026, 2pm –4pm
 - Friday, December 11, 2026, 2pm –4pm
- Announcements
 - Sarahjini Nunn reminded board members of the CHW promotional video initiative that was announced to support outreach for the certification program. Board members were asked to identify CHWs who may be interested in participating. The video will highlight the CHW role and promote certification, with participation being voluntary. Submissions are due by May 1, 2026.
 - Lori Weiselberg mentioned the “Coming Soon” flyer to promote the CHW Certification Program and encouraged Board members to distribute it to potential training providers and community partners. The flyer was included in the board packet that was emailed.

14. Other Business

- None

15. Adjournment

- Emma Villarreal moved to adjourn
- Ricardo Anderson seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*