

Community Health Workers Review Board Meeting

February 21, 2025

2:00 – 4:30pm

The meeting can be viewed [HERE](#)

1. Call to Order

- **CHW Review Board members present:** Dr. Janice Phillips, Wandy Hernandez, Kristin Hartsaw, Monica Cuevas, Leticia Boughton-Price, Noelle Moore, Tracey Smith, Ashley Colwell, Esther Sciammarella, David Sanders, Emma Villarreal. Kristin Hartsaw, Ryan Croke, Kevin Wood, Angela Ellison, Kathryn Gunther, Monica Cuevas, Rep. Maura Hirschauer, Omayra Giachello
- **CHW Review Board members not present:** Rep. Camille Lilly, Dr. Shami Goyal, Lubia Nunez-Montelongo, Ket Herena, Latoya Greenwood, and Ofelia Figueroa.
- **IDPH staff present:** Melissa Stalets, Sarahjini Nunn, Marcella Kincaid, Lori Weiselberg, Hillary Aggertt, Allison Nickrent, and Omayra Giachello.
- **Invited Guest present:** Leslie Carnahan, Caroline Hollahan, Brenda Soto, Ana W., and Laura Howestine, UIC Cancer Center; Chris Azpilcueta, InterpreNet; and Robert Marlow, SIUC.
- **Other Guests present:** Taisha Selby, AgeOptions; Gabriela Gutierrez, Alivio Medical Center; Isabelle Hosek, Governor's Office; Marcia Burgess, HMPRG; Sharyn Dyer, UIC Cancer Center; Stephanie Standish, IPHA; Rachael Telleen, HAP Foundation; Elizabeth Trevino, Zach Wilder, IL Children's Healthcare Foundation; Cealisa Johnson (Cece), Laura Markin, Selina Williams, and Melanie Francia, UChicago Medicine; Veronica Sek, SUHI; and Gregory Scott.

2. Approve January Board Meeting Minutes

- David Sanders moved to approve the minutes from the January 24, 2025 Board Meeting.
- Noelle Moore seconded the motion.
- Angela Ellison abstained since she was not present at the January meeting. *Motion Passed*

3. Board Process Decisions and Reminders

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

4. Public Comment Period

- Leticia Boughton-Price provided a summary of key takeaways from the Illinois Community Health Workers Association (ILCHWA) Annual Summit held on January 31, 2025, in Champaign, Illinois. The Summit included facilitated discussions focused on: (1) CHW Trainers, (2) Evaluating CHW skills, and (3) Continuing Education. The topics were selected to align with conversations and decisions being made by the Illinois Community Health Workers Review Board in 2025. See the attached addendum.

5. IL Department of Health and Family Services: CHW Update

- Kristin Hartsaw, Special Assistant to the Director, HFS Medical Policy, provided an update related to the Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA). She noted that she is closely monitoring any federal developments pertaining to Medicaid and will keep the Board informed about the status of the SPA. To date, there have been no changes.

6. Revisit Review Board Timeline for Administrative Rule Review

- Lori Weiselberg reviewed the timeline for finalizing Board recommendations related to administrative rules. She indicated if the Board completed its approval of recommendations at the March 21st meeting, the rules could be submitted to JCAR in September, with the program implementation expected in or around mid-2026.

7. Administrative Rules Review

- **Revisit the following sections as time allows for discussion/questions/concerns.**
 - **Review Part F: Competencies and Instructor Qualifications**
 - Lori Weiselberg presented the final section of Subpart F related to the IDPH-approved Instructor Training Course, pass rate, and options to retake the course module quizzes.
 - Angela Ellison expressed concerns regarding disqualifying instructors if they are unable to pass the required instructor training course. Leticia Boughton-Price agreed.
 - The rules were updated to reflect an 80% pass rate (instead of 90%) for each module quiz and the ability of instructors to retake the module quizzes they did not pass.
 - **A roll call vote was taken to approve Subpart E and Subpart F – Motion Passed Unanimously**
 - **Subpart C: CHW Certification, Pathways to Certification**
 - Lori Weiselberg presented drafts rules and proposed sunsetting the “grandfathering” clause (Work Experience pathway) two years after the CHW Certification Program launches.
 - a) Angela Ellison questioned the need to sunset the pathway as there may be CHWs who do not apply for certification right away. Leticia Boughton-Price agreed and asked for clarification of the language that was included in the Act.
 - b) Allison Nickrent offered clarification of the language and said she would double check on the intent and report back to the Board.
 - c) Angela Ellison suggested that the those wishing to use the work experience pathway be required to take the CHW Refresher Course.
 - A straw poll was taken to determine if the CHW Refresher Course should be required or not. *The Board voted overwhelmingly in favor of recommending the CHW Refresher Course be required for those using the work experience pathway.*
 - A straw poll was taken to determine support for extending the work experience pathway indefinitely. *The Board voted in favor of recommending the extension of the work experience pathway indefinitely.*
 - Lori Weiselberg discussed the Reciprocity Pathway to certification and proposed a simple rule like the State of Arizona. This is that an individual with a State CHW certification from

another state in the US who has held that certification for at least a year, be granted reciprocity. Several Board members indicated that they did not think a timeframe on holding the certification for a year was necessary, that as long as the certification was current and the CHW was in good standing, that would be sufficient.

- **Subpart A/B: Definition and Review Board**
 - To be discussed at the next Board Meeting.

8. Role of the Board Post Administrative Rule Review

- Allison Nickrent, IDPH Division Chief of Governmental Affairs stated that the work of the CHW Review Board does not end with the adoption of administrative rules. Its role will expand, input, and strategic recommendations to ensure the CHW certification program remains effective, adaptive, and aligned with community needs.

9. Second Public Comment Period

- None

10. Schedule of Board Meetings and Announcements

- **Schedule of Board Meetings**
 - Friday, March 21, 2-4:30pm
 - Friday, April 25, 2-4pm
 - Friday, May 30, 2-4pm
 - Friday, June 27, 2-4pm
- **Announcements:**
 - Sarahjini Nunn made the following announcements:
 - The CHW Certification Program released a NOFO to create a multi-year plan to promote and advance the CHW workforce in Illinois. An info session was held and the recording is available for [REVIEW](#).
 - Board Members whose term will be expiring should expect a phone call from Marcella to gauge interest in continuing to serve on the Board.

○ Adjournment

- Emma Villareal moved to adjourn the meeting.
- Wandy Hernandez seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*



CENTER *for* HEALTH LAW
and POLICY INNOVATION
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

February 21, 2025

Dear Illinois Community Health Worker Review Board,

We submit this letter to summarize key takeaways from the Illinois Community Health Workers Association¹ (ILCHWA) Annual Summit held on January 31, 2025, in Champaign, Illinois. The event was attended by over 100 individuals and included community health workers (CHWs) and related professionals.

After hearing a presentation from the Illinois Department of Public Health about implementation of the Community Health Worker Certification and Reimbursement Act, the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation² divided attendees into thirteen small groups for facilitated discussions. These discussions focused on: (1) CHW Trainers, (2) Evaluating CHW Skills, and (3) Continuing Education. Topics were selected to align with conversations and decisions being made by the Illinois Community Health Workers Review Board in 2025.

We hope you will consider the summaries included below as you develop and finalize relevant rules and regulations.

CHW Trainers

We asked attendees to discuss what qualities they would want in a CHW trainer and reflect on teaching methods that have been effective in this field. Many attendees discussed the need for teachers to be able to connect with their students and to be passionate about what they teach. Effective trainers would need to understand that CHW coursework is not just training for a certification, but training for a career. Attendees noted that teachers need to be easily approachable

¹ The Illinois Community Health Workers Association is a statewide membership association dedicated to the growth and sustainability of the CHW workforce. ILCHWA advocates for a CHW workforce ecosystem that supports the delivery of effective and quality care to our communities.

² The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School is committed to promoting health equity and justice by increasing access to high quality and comprehensive health care for systematically marginalized communities—particularly people living on low incomes, communities of color, and those living with chronic health conditions.

and have several teaching methods available at their disposal. Such flexibility would allow trainers to ensure their teaching styles match their students' diverse learning styles. Attendees added that trainers should incorporate real-life experience, guided examples, relevant experts, skill demonstrations, and shadowing into their classrooms. Many also noted that cultural humility is key.

Attendees cautioned that CHW trainers should not assume that students have a particular baseline knowledge or that everyone in the room arrives with the same skillset. They noted that trainers should take the time to assess students' learning abilities and experiences at the beginning of a course to ensure no assumptions are made. Attendees warned that not understanding a student's socioeconomic situation or judging their appearance could make them ineffective educators and that the ability to empathize with students is critical in the classroom.

Evaluating CHW Skills

We asked attendees to discuss what CHW skills were important in their work and how to best evaluate competency in these areas. Many discussions focused on the ability to relate and listen to a client and the ability to navigate important conversations. Attendees felt it was important that CHWs be able to work with diverse populations and that they be trustworthy and reliable.

Attendees noted blanket evaluation styles are not helpful. Instead, they recommended using multiple methods to evaluate skill competencies, including case studies, role play and reflection in small groups, reviewing intake notes, supervisor observation and feedback, client and community partner feedback, quality metrics, and knowledge tests. Self-reflection was also emphasized so that CHWs can consider how they implement their skills and ways to improve.

Most attendees were supportive of the idea that someone with no CHW experience might be required to complete 100 hours of classroom training and 80 hours of field experience to obtain certification and someone with CHW experience would need to show 2,500 hours of field experience along with 20 hours of online classroom time to obtain certification. They largely felt that these standards would be feasible. Attendees noted that while classroom training is good, shadowing a CHW in the field is more effective at helping a student exercise and develop their skills. Even with classroom training and field work requirements, attendees noted that field work earlier in the certification timeline can be useful, particularly to connect classroom lectures to practical skills. Some attendees shared that CHW trainees should experience at least two 40-hour weeks of fieldwork. Other attendees noted that it is important to ensure CHWs (in the field) are prepared to receive students for fieldwork requirements.

Continuing Education

We asked attendees to reflect on continuing education courses, particularly what has been effective about courses they've taken and what they would like to see in the future. Many attendees stressed the importance of continuing education – especially to ensure that CHWs are equipped with the

most up-to-date and accurate knowledge about issues that impact their communities. Specific topics were discussed, including courses on substance use, asthma, diabetes, domestic violence, social determinants of health, cultural competency, communications skills, and new medications and medical devices. Ultimately, attendees felt it was important that coursework remain relevant to the CHW role and that classes be aligned with employment, professional, and personal goals.

Continuing education courses would need to have a dynamic classroom style with space for group discussions and interactive, hands-on learning opportunities. Attendees noted that it would be important to make sure such courses are accessible through need-based scholarships, multiple classroom formats (e.g., on-line vs. in person), multiple locations across the state, and availability in different languages (e.g., Spanish). Attendees felt it'd be helpful to have teachers with CHW experience and teachers that are in CHW-adjacent spaces (and who are experienced at working alongside CHWs). Attendees noted that courses that are too technical or too complex for the time period allotted can be ineffective. Additionally, attendees cautioned against requiring courses where the course content never changes and is repetitive. Such classes can make attendees feel like they are just going through the motion of continuing education without taking away any important learnings. Some attendees raised the idea that having courses that could satisfy continuing education requirements for multiple licenses/certifications would be helpful as well.

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We thank you for the opportunity to share feedback from ILCHWA members on these three important topics. We believe it is important that decisions made about CHWs be made in consultation with CHWs and invite you to reach out for similar feedback as the Board continues to advise the Department of Public Health on the implementation and sustainability of the CHW Certification program in Illinois.

Sincerely,

/s/ Leticia B. Price

Leticia B. Price
Co-Executive Director
Illinois CHW Association

/s/ Wandy Hernandez

Wandy Hernandez
Co-Executive Director
Illinois CHW Association

/s/ Maryanne Tomazic

Maryanne Tomazic
Clinical Instructor
Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation