Minnesota Department of Health

Governor’s 2024-2025 Biennial Budget Recommendation

# Community Health Workers

Enhancing health and well-being with community-led care

Community health workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers and trusted members of the communities they serve. Community health workers are effective in improving conditions to support health and reducing health disparities in underserved communities. MDH will work with the Minnesota Community Health Workers Alliance to: 1) support a clearinghouse and center of excellence for CHW resources; 2) strengthen partnerships with CHW certificate schools; 3) strengthen connections with decision-makers at DHS and health plans to address reimbursement challenges; and 4) provide technical assistance to employers in a broad range of employment sites (i.e., health clinics, social services, public safety, schools, family home visiting programs, factories, childcare and elder programs) to increase employment opportunities for community health workers. MDH will evaluate these efforts to create a sustainable plan to support community health worker infrastructure statewide by: 1) leading an environmental scan at the state and national levels to understand CHW models and 2) rigorously evaluating the structure and impact of the existing CHW models in Minnesota.

## Why it’s Necessary

Minnesotans are more likely to use referrals and preventive services when they are connected to care through community health workers. This can help reduce health disparities, eliminate avoidable emergency department visits, and prevent chronic health conditions, injury, violence, and substance use disorders. Community health workers help Minnesotans access needed services, help service providers provide quality and culturally appropriate care, and address the social conditions that impact health.

Amount Recommended

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY 24/25** | **FY 26/27** |
| *General Fund* |  |  |
| Expenditure | 1,942 | 1,942 |
| **Net Cost (Savings)** | **1,942** | **1,942** |

Note: Amounts are dollars in thousands

## Benefit to Minnesotans

A strengthened community health worker workforce will help more Minnesotans lead healthier lives through improved access to health care and other social services and reduced health disparities. Expanded community health worker capacity and access will also reduce health care spending. A sustainable, evidence-based workforce model will improve health and wellness, particularly in communities that experience health disparities, and create more jobs for CHWs and qualified candidates to fill these positions.

Minnesota Department of Health  
[Health.Legislative@state.mn.us](mailto:Health.Legislative@state.mn.us)  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us/)

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