
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2436

State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session

By House Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Robinson, Riccelli, Pollet, Ormsby, and Santos)

READ FIRST TIME 01/26/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to defining community health workers and their
2 roles; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; and creating a new
3 section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) The community health worker task force was convened by the
7 healthier Washington initiative in 2015 to develop policy and system
8 change recommendations related to the community health worker
9 workforce. The task force considered the continuum of community
10 health workers, from volunteers, to generalists who support the
11 health and well-being of individuals and communities, to those who
12 work in specialized roles.

13 (b) The task force issued a report with recommendations related
14 to: The definition, roles, skills, and qualities of community health
15 workers; community health worker training and education; and finance
16 related matters.

17 (c) The nine accountable communities of health across the state
18 as part of the medicaid transformation demonstration are all pursuing
19 projects that incorporate community health workers, in addition to
20 many other programs utilizing community health workers across the
21 state.

1 (2) Therefore the legislature intends to create consistency
2 across the state by defining community health workers and their roles
3 as recommended by the task force's report.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.70
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) A "community health worker" means a frontline public health
7 worker who is a trusted member of or who has a uniquely close
8 understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship
9 enables the worker to serve as a liaison, link, or intermediary
10 between health and social services and the community to facilitate
11 access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of
12 service delivery.

13 (2) A "frontline public health worker" means someone who works to
14 improve community health or the health of populations.

15 (3) The roles and activities of a community health worker may
16 include:

17 (a) Cultural mediation among individuals, communities, and health
18 and social service systems. Cultural mediation includes educating
19 individuals and communities about navigating health and social
20 service systems and educating systems about community perspectives
21 and cultural norms to build health literacy and cross-cultural
22 communication.

23 (b) Providing culturally appropriate health education and
24 information including conducting health promotion and disease
25 prevention education in a manner that matches linguistic and cultural
26 needs of participants or a community, providing necessary information
27 to understand and prevent diseases, and to help people manage health
28 conditions.

29 (c) Conducting outreach including finding and recruiting
30 individuals that would benefit from services, following up on health
31 and social service encounters with individuals, families, and
32 community groups and helping problem solve any barriers, conducting
33 home visits to provide education, assessment, and social support, and
34 presenting information at agency and community events.

35 (d) Care coordination, case management, and system navigation
36 including participating in making referrals, care coordination, and
37 case management with an emphasis on connecting individuals to their
38 medical home or primary care provider, connecting individuals to
39 community resources and services, documenting and tracking individual

1 and population level data, and informing decision makers and systems
2 about community assets and challenges.

3 (e) Providing coaching and social support including providing
4 support and informal coaching to individuals, motivating and
5 encouraging people to obtain insurance coverage, care, and other
6 services when applicable, supporting self-management of disease
7 prevention and management of health conditions within the parameters
8 set by the organization and supervisor, and planning and leading
9 support groups.

10 (f) Advocating for individuals and communities, including
11 advocating for individuals as well as for the basic needs and
12 perspectives of communities, which may include participating in
13 policy advocacy.

14 (g) Building individual and community capacity including building
15 capacity of individuals to manage their health and well-being by
16 teaching skills, expanding the individual's knowledge and supporting
17 their empowerment to participate in individual, family, community,
18 and systems improvement, strengthening a sense of community and
19 social connection, identifying and coordinating the use of individual
20 and community assets and strengths, defining community development
21 pathways, strengthening and diversifying leadership, increasing
22 participation in decision making, and training and building
23 individual capacity with community health worker peers and among
24 groups of community health workers to improve individual and
25 community health.

26 (h) Implementing individual and community assessments including
27 participating in design, implementation, and interpretation of
28 individual-level assessments, such as home environmental assessments,
29 and community-level assessments, such as surveys of community assets
30 and challenges.

31 (i) Participating in evaluation and research including evaluating
32 community health worker services and programs, identifying and
33 engaging research partners, supporting community consent processes,
34 identifying priority issues and evaluation and research questions,
35 developing evaluation and research design and methods, data
36 collection, and interpretation, reviewing findings with the
37 community, and engaging stakeholders to take action on findings.

38 (4) By July 1, 2019, the department shall adopt rules defining
39 the direct services that community health workers may provide.

1 (5) By July 1, 2019, any public or private entity that employs a
2 community health worker shall perform a fingerprint-based background
3 check through the Washington state patrol for all community health
4 workers performing the roles described in subsections (3) and (4) of
5 this section. A background check for each community health worker
6 must be completed prior to the community health worker performing the
7 roles described in subsections (3) and (4) of this section on behalf
8 of the entity.

9 (6) By October 1, 2018, to the extent of the department's
10 existing authority the department shall begin to implement the
11 recommendations of the community health worker task force related to
12 training and education. The department shall report to the
13 legislature on the progress of implementation no later than July 1,
14 2020.

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