

## HCR 28 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### Senate Committee On Rules

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**Meeting Dates:** 4/23

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure designates the week of August 17 to 23, 2025, as Community Healthcare Workers Week; recognizes the significant contributions of community health workers to improve health outcomes in underserved communities; and encourages collaboration at the local, state, and federal levels to raise awareness of the critical role of community health workers in Oregon and throughout the United States.

Fiscal impact: No impact

Revenue impact: No impact

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

##### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

##### BACKGROUND:

Community health workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community in which they serve. Community health workers have a uniquely intimate understanding of the communities they serve, and that understanding enables them to build trusted relationships, serve as liaisons between the community and much needed health and social services, improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery, increase treatment capacity in underserved areas, and improve community health knowledge and individual self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, informal counseling, coaching, social support, and advocacy.

Community health workers are recognized with a professional certification in a growing number of states in the United States. They are a historic workforce that goes back hundreds of years in the United States and that reflects the diversity that makes this country great.

Community health workers have been known by many different titles, including community health representatives, promotoras de salud, aunties, peers, and outreach workers. They are a cross-sector workforce that connects community members to health care and other social services, reducing barriers to health and well-being.

Community health workers are a proven workforce with decades of research documenting effectiveness in maternal and child health, chronic disease interventions, immunization, oral health, HIV, primary care, and many other disciplines, as well as a documented return on investment for many programs.

Sustainable funding of community health workers supports fair market wages and enhanced recruitment and retention of the workforce. Community health workers fulfill a wide range of roles, including

- facilitating cultural mediation among individuals, communities, and health and social service systems,
- providing culturally appropriate health education,
- coordinating care, case management and health system navigation,
- advocating for individuals and communities,
- building community capacity,
- providing direct service,

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- implementing individual and community assessments, and
- participating in evaluation and research.

Community health worker networks are statewide, regional, or local associations or coalitions with leadership and membership composed of at least 50 percent community health workers, and whose activities include training, workforce development, mentoring, and other initiatives to support community health worker programs.