



VANESSA CORNWALL

Intergovernmental Relations Officer
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DATE: March 3, 2025
TO: House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
FROM: Vanessa Cornwall, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Officer
RE: HB 2216, Relating to Community Health Workers

Dear Chair Nosse, Co-Chair Javadi and Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

Lane County supports HB 2216, which directs the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to assess reimbursement structures for Community Health Workers (CHWs) and provide technical assistance to establish sustainable billing mechanisms for this critical workforce.

Community Health Workers serve as trusted liaisons within our communities, providing essential public health services. In Lane County, they play a vital role in coordinating care, connecting residents to necessary resources, delivering in-home support, and improving overall health outcomes. Their work is especially crucial for vulnerable populations, including older adults, individuals with chronic conditions, those experiencing housing insecurity, and residents in our rural and frontier areas with limited access to healthcare.

Currently, CHW services in Lane County are largely funded through temporary grants or inconsistent funding from Coordinated Care Organizations and other payers. While some Medicaid reimbursement opportunities exist, they are difficult to navigate, administratively burdensome, and vary across different provider organizations. Without sustainable funding, CHW programs face constant uncertainty, and when they disappear, so does the community trust they have built over time.

Lane County's CHWs are embedded within our FQHC system where they provide critical support by addressing social determinants of health, assist with care coordination, and connect residents to essential services. However, the existing fee-for-service billing structures do not fully account for the breadth of services provided, and codes are often misaligned with the comprehensive, relationship-based support CHWs provide. A clear and consistent reimbursement structure would allow CHWs to focus on community care rather than program survival, ensuring continuity in trusted relationships and improving health outcomes in vulnerable populations.

As an active participant in OHA's CHW Payment Model Subcommittee, Lane County remains committed to finding solutions. Supporting HB 2216 is a necessary first step toward ensuring long-term financial sustainability for CHWs, strengthening community health, and reducing overall healthcare costs.

ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS OFFICER