

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS/PROMOTOR(AS/ES)/ REPRESENTATIVES (CHW/P/Rs) KEEP CALIFORNIANS COVERED



\$4 MILLION ONE-TIME (FY2026-27): Bolster CHW/P/Rs & CBOs to maintain coverage + connect to care



THE PROBLEM

Rapid Policy Changes Without Clear Guidance Will Put Families' Coverage at Risk

- Over the next couple of years, new federal and state Medi-Cal rules will make it **harder for people to enroll in and keep their health care coverage**.
- Up to **3 million Californians could be at risk of losing access** to important physical and behavioral health care, even if they remain eligible.
- Many families are **not receiving clear, timely, or language-accessible information** about what these changes mean for them.
- **Immigrant communities will face additional barriers**, including fear and misinformation, making it harder to stay connected to care when support is needed most.

THE SOLUTION

Invest in CHW/P/Rs

- **CHW/P/Rs are trusted links** who help families navigate changes and stay connected to care, preventing eligible Californians from falling through the cracks of a changing Medi-Cal system.
- **Existing Infrastructure:** California already has infrastructure in place that can be quickly scaled, such as the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) Immigrant Community Health and Resilience Fund.
- **Budget ask:** This FY2026-27 \$4 million one-time funding request builds on HCAI's infrastructure by expanding CHW/P/R and CBO capacity to provide health navigation at the scale needed during this critical time.



WHAT OUR \$4 MILLION ASK WOULD SUPPORT

- ✓ Trauma-informed outreach and education about Medi-Cal changes and available low or no-cost care options.
- ✓ Enrollment, renewal, and continuity-of-coverage support (including helping members understand notices and policy changes).
- ✓ Referrals and linkages to health, mental health, and oral health care – including when benefits change (for example, adult dental).
- ✓ Support to meet new verification requirements (as applicable), reducing administrative churn and preventable terminations.

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California Pan-Ethnic
HEALTH NETWORK

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

About the CHW/P/R Benefit

What is the CHW/P/R Benefit: In July 2022, Medi-Cal added culturally and linguistically responsive CHW/P/R services as a new benefit to reduce disparities and improve health outcomes for Medi-Cal's diverse enrollees. CHW/P/Rs provide health education, navigation, care coordination, screening and assessment, individual support and advocacy, as well as support for behavioral health and social needs.

Who are CHW/P/Rs and who do they serve: CHW/P/Rs reflect the populations served by the Medi-Cal program. The majority of the CHW/P/R workforce in California are Women and Latine and/or come from culturally diverse populations with historically limited representation in the state's health workforce.

CHW/P/Rs Strengthen Communities



Improve Health Care Quality

CHW/P/Rs address health disparities by bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, improving outcomes for underserved and culturally diverse communities.



Prevent Costly Gaps in Care

They connect individuals at risk of losing coverage to timely services, helping prevent avoidable ER visits and higher state costs.



Support Continuity of Care

They assist with Medi-Cal enrollment and retention, helping members stay covered while reducing confusion and administrative burden.



Provide Trusted Community Guidance

With deep community ties, they reach hard-to-serve populations, increasing access to care and improving health outcomes.

CHW/P/Rs Are Front-Line Workers

CHW/P/Rs have always been a critical part of California's health workforce in times of crisis.

- ✓ Responded on the front lines during COVID-19
- ✓ Supported communities through the Southern California fires
- ✓ Provided immigrant rights and essential community health services

CHW/P/R Story: A Lifeline in Crisis



After the Eaton fires in Los Angeles, a promotora met an elderly man who had lost his home and was sleeping in his car. He was overwhelmed, exhausted, and unsure where to turn. She began by helping him secure emergency resources, including car repairs, so he wouldn't lose the only shelter he had left. Once his immediate needs were stabilized, she gently opened a conversation about how he was coping. **Through trust and patience, she connected him to mental health care and ongoing support. What began as crisis response became a pathway back to stability – because someone he trusted walked alongside him.**