

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: H2/13/25 S3/18/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1258

By: Representative L. Johnson

By: Senator Irvin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO CREATE THE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER ACT; TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE CERTIFICATION FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO CREATE THE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER ACT; AND TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE CERTIFICATION FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 17, is amended to add an additional chapter to read as follows:

CHAPTER 46

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER ACT

Subchapter 1 - General Provisions

17-46-101. Title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Community Health Worker Act".

17-46-102. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Community health worker" means an individual who is a



trusted member of or has an unusually close understanding of the community that he or she is serving as a liaison, link, or intermediary between health services or social services and the community to facilitate access to health services or social services and to improve the quality and cultural competence of the services delivered;

(2) "Health benefit plan" means an individual, blanket, or any group plan, policy, or contract for healthcare services issued or delivered in this state by a healthcare insurer, health maintenance organization, hospital medical service corporation, or self-insured governmental or church plan in this state;

(3) "Healthcare professional" means a person who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of this state to administer health care in the ordinary course of the practice of his or her profession; and

(4) "Healthcare provider" means:

(A) A hospital;

(B) An ambulatory surgical center;

(C) A primary care center;

(D) An outpatient psychiatric center;

(E) A home healthcare agency;

(F) A skilled nursing facility; or

(G) An individual licensed to render covered healthcare services.

Subchapter 2 - Certifications

17-46-201. Community health worker – Certification.

(a) The Department of Health shall issue a certification to be a community health worker to an individual who:

(1) Is eighteen (18) years of age or older;

(2) Meets one (1) of the following requirements:

(A) He or she is certified as a community health worker by the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association;

(B) He or she has worked as a community health worker for two (2) years with one (1) in this state and successfully completes a community health worker training program consisting of one hundred twenty

(120) hours of core competency, including eighty (80) hours of didactic training and forty (40) hours of guided field practice from a school or training program approved by the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association in consultation with the department;

(C) He or she has worked as a community health worker for one (1) year within this state and has met the following requirements as outlined by the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association:

(i) Successfully completed eighty (80) hours of supplemental training that supports core competency and professional development;

(ii) Been assigned a mentor who is a certified community health worker in this state or is eligible for certification and regularly accessed and communicated with the mentor at least two (2) times per month during the first three (3) months of the mentorship and monthly thereafter; and

(iii) Been assigned a supervisor who has completed community health worker supervisor training and regularly accessed and communicated with the supervisor at least two (2) times per week during the first three (3) months of supervision and weekly for the remainder of the year; or

(D) He or she has four (4) years of experience that provides evidence of proficiency in the core competencies, with two (2) years of experience being in this state; and

(3) Submits an application with an application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(c)(1) A certification is valid for two (2) years after the date of issuance.

(2) To renew a certification, a community health worker shall:

(A) Complete twenty (20) hours of professional developmental and training related to core competencies of a community health worker within the two-year period; and

(B) Submit a renewal application with a renewal application fee as determined by the department, in consultation with the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association.

(d) The Arkansas Community Health Worker Association, in conjunction with the Division of Higher Education, shall create and maintain a registry

of approved community health worker training programs to be made available to the public.

17-46-202. Suspension, revocation, nonissuance, or nonrenewal.

(a) The Department of Health may suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue or renew the certification of a community health worker for:

(1) Securing a certification under this chapter through fraud or deceit;

(2) Unethical conduct, gross ignorance, or inefficiency in the conduct of his or her practice;

(3) Using a false name or an alias in his or her practice;

(4) Violating any provision of this chapter; or

(5) Failing to comply with any of the requirements for issuance of the certification.

(b) Proceedings under this section shall comply with the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

Subchapter 3 - Miscellaneous Provisions

17-46-301. Scope of practice.

A community health worker shall perform only the following types of services:

(1) Providing:

(A) Cultural mediation among individuals, communities, and health service systems or social services systems, or both;

(B) Culturally appropriate health education and information;

(C) Care coordination, including without limitation medication compliance under a patient care plan as directed by a healthcare provider or healthcare professional;

(D) Case management;

(E) Health service system navigation or social services system navigation, or both;

(F) Coaching and social support; and

(G) Direct services that:

(i) In order to be performed, do not require a

professional license under subtitle 3 of this title or specialized training under § 20-77-2301 et seq., such as first aid and diabetic foot checks; or

(ii) Are not met by a personal care attendant;

(2) Advocating for individuals and communities;

(3) Building individual and community capacity;

(4) Implementing individual and community assessments, including

without limitation:

(A) Basic home environmental assessments; and

(B) Basic health screening and tests;

(5) Conducting outreach, such as health literacy services; and

(6) Participating in evaluation and research, including without

limitation health education and community research activities.

17-46-302. Patient and personal data and information.

(a) Patient and personal data and information accessed or attained by a community health worker is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., and is confidential and privileged as otherwise required by federal law.

(b) If a community health worker does not maintain the confidential and privileged nature of the patient data or information, the community health worker shall be subject to any penalty under state and federal law for a breach of confidential patient data or information.

17-46-303. Community health worker compensation.

A community health worker certified under this chapter shall receive compensation for services provided from:

(1) The Arkansas Medicaid Program; or

(2) A health benefit plan.

17-46-304. Rules.

The Department of Health may promulgate rules relating to the certification and regulation of community health workers under this subchapter.

/s/L. Johnson