INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2015-197

REQUESTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR STUDY THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN OTHER STATES AND THE POTENTIAL BENEFIT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, community health workers are increasingly being acknowledged as integral members of the United States healthcare workforce; and

WHEREAS, community health workers are community members who work primarily in community settings and who serve as connectors between healthcare consumers and providers to promote health among groups that have traditionally lacked access to health care; and

WHEREAS, community health workers are also known as community health advocates, lay health educators, community health representatives, promotores de salud, and various other terms; and

WHEREAS, community health workers are not new to the healthcare workforce, but have served communities in many capacities for decades; and

WHEREAS, community health workers are uniquely qualified as connectors because community health workers speak the language of their community, know the values and priorities of the community, and recognize cultural buffers; and

WHEREAS, many interventions that integrate community health workers into healthcare delivery systems are associated with:

(1) Reductions in chronic illnesses;

(2) Better medication adherence;

(3) Increased patient involvement;

(4) Improvements in overall community health; and

(5) Reduced healthcare costs; and
WHEREAS, approximately forty (40) states have include community health workers in aspects of health care; and

WHEREAS, approximately fifteen (15) states have enacted legislation to establish advisory bodies, scope of practice, certification or training programs, standard curriculums with core skills, Medicaid payment reimbursement, other reimbursement, or integration into team-based health care for community health workers; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas law does not specifically include community health workers or provide for the licensure of community health workers; and

WHEREAS, community health workers could potentially fulfill the role of care coordinators under any healthcare delivery model and in the patient-centered medical home model to fill the gaps in the community healthcare resources,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF THE NINETYTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study the impact of community health workers in other states and to evaluate the potential benefit of community health workers to the State of Arkansas, including without limitation:

(1) The types of reimbursement that could be available for community health workers;

(2) The scope of practice of community health workers;

(3) The certification or licensure requirements for community health workers;

(4) The national trends regarding community health workers; and

(5) Existing studies and data regarding community health workers.

Respectfully submitted,
Representative Chris Richey
District 12

By: JMB/JMB