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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that during the  
2 coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) pandemic, many rural areas in  
3 the State of Hawaii were disconnected and unable to receive  
4 adequate healthcare services. As rural communities struggled  
5 with connectivity, transportation, and financial obligations,  
6 community health workers provided a critical lifeline to  
7 ensuring its residents healthcare needs are met. With the  
8 rapidly changing global health pandemic, rural communities that  
9 have limited healthcare services are at a greater risk of  
10 receiving access to adequate, timely and life-saving healthcare  
11 services.

12           Many families living in rural areas comprise diverse  
13 communities, including low-income, underserved rural areas, all  
14 ethnicities, children, adults, families, elderly individuals,  
15 uninsured individuals, homeless individuals, immigrants and  
16 migrant workers. Many of these families face language and



1 cultural barriers that require further assistance and technology  
2 in the community.

3 The legislature further finds that with deepening food  
4 insecurity, increasing housing instability, slow job recovery,  
5 and the replacement of many in-person health services with  
6 telehealth services, the need for community health workers to  
7 bridge communities and systems of care is greater than ever.  
8 Increasing the number of community healthcare workers and  
9 standardizing their certification and training will help address  
10 these issues.

11 The purpose of this Act is to establish a task force to  
12 plan the certification and training process for community health  
13 workers.

14 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall establish a  
15 community health worker certification task force to plan the  
16 certification and training process for community health workers  
17 to help address the social determinants of poor health that  
18 disproportionately affect low-income, minority populations,  
19 which are magnified during times of crisis.

20 (b) The director of health or the director's designee  
21 shall serve as the chairperson of the task force. The director



1 of health shall invite the following individuals to serve as the  
2 members of the task force:

- 3 (1) One community health worker from each county;
- 4 (2) A representative from the University of Hawaii system;
- 5 (3) A representative from the University of Hawaii office  
6 of public health studies;
- 7 (4) A representative from the Hawaii public health  
8 institute;
- 9 (5) A representative from the Hawaii public housing  
10 authority;
- 11 (6) A representative from the department of human services  
12 med-QUEST division;
- 13 (7) A representative from the Hawaii health systems  
14 corporation;
- 15 (8) A representative from the University of Hawaii west  
16 Oahu; and
- 17 (9) A representative from the University of Hawaii school  
18 of nursing and dental hygiene.

19 (c) The task force shall submit a report detailing the  
20 status of the plan for the certification and training process  
21 for community health workers required by this Act, including any



1 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty  
2 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2022.

3 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

Community Health Workers; Certification; Training; Department of Health; Task Force

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Health to establish a task force to plan the certification and training process for community health workers and submit a report to the legislature. (SD1)

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