

JAN 19 2024

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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 community health  
2 workers connect rural, underserved communities with programs and  
3 services that impact social determinants of health and address  
4 factors such as access to health care, prevention, outreach, and  
5 training. Often serving in rural, underserved communities,  
6 community health workers spend a significant portion of their  
7 time doing telehealth and behavioral health, outreach such as  
8 assisting individuals to apply for medical insurance, providing  
9 health education resources, and locating work opportunities.  
10 Other community health workers may serve as translators,  
11 assisting their communities to navigate health care and social  
12 service systems.

13           In 2021, the legislature introduced Senate Bill No. 858,  
14 Regular Session of 2021, serving as the first attempt to certify  
15 all community health workers. However, concerns raised during  
16 the legislative process deemed the certification process  
17 premature. Subsequently, the legislature introduced Senate Bill



1 No. 2882, Regular Session of 2022 (S.B. No. 2882), which  
2 proposed a community health worker certification program to  
3 improve the quality of care and access to health care for  
4 residents in the state, especially in rural areas. While  
5 S.B. No. 2882 intended to recognize the important work community  
6 health workers perform for the State, the measure did not pass.  
7 However, the legislature adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution  
8 No. 2, Regular Session of 2022, which requested the auditor to  
9 conduct a sunrise review of the certification and regulation of  
10 community health workers. Accordingly, the auditor conducted a  
11 sunrise review of the certification and regulation of community  
12 health workers in September 2022. The auditor found that  
13 existing regulations under the Hawaii Regulatory Licensing  
14 Reform Act require professions reasonably relating to health,  
15 safety, or welfare of consumers to be subjected to state  
16 oversight. Although the auditor noted that S.B. No. 2882 had an  
17 intended benefit to the profession of community health workers,  
18 regulation is not needed for consumer protection, as the types  
19 of services provided by community health workers do not  
20 reasonably endanger the health, safety, or welfare of those  
21 benefiting from their services. Additionally, the auditor found



1 that there were no past or ongoing complaints against community  
2 health workers or unreasonable barriers to entering the  
3 profession. Therefore, the auditor determined that mandatory  
4 statewide certification for community health workers would be  
5 inconsistent with existing state policy relating to the  
6 regulation of new professions and vocations.

7 The legislature further finds that there continues to be a  
8 great need for community health workers, especially in rural and  
9 underserved communities that do not have reliable access to  
10 health education, resources, or job opportunities. As a  
11 critical intermediary between residents and health care and  
12 social services, community health workers have a unique  
13 understanding of their community needs and accessibility to  
14 services. Establishing a clear role, including major  
15 responsibilities and scope of work, will allow community health  
16 workers to continue their valuable work to communities  
17 statewide.

18 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish a three-  
19 year Ka'ū community health worker pilot program.

20 SECTION 2. (a) The department of health shall establish  
21 and administer a three-year community health worker pilot



1 program in Ka‘ū, Hawai‘i county, to provide outreach, education,  
2 training, and navigation to individuals residing in Ka‘ū and to  
3 address social determinants of health, by a community health  
4 worker.

5 (b) Community health workers participating in the Ka‘ū  
6 community health worker pilot program may provide the following  
7 services:

8 (1) Health education and outreach:

9 (A) Community health workers shall conduct health  
10 education programs within the Ka‘ū community to  
11 promote health awareness, disease prevention, and  
12 healthy lifestyle practices; and

13 (B) Provide information on available health care  
14 services, resources, and programs to community  
15 members;

16 (2) Individual support and assistance:

17 (A) Community health workers shall offer assistance  
18 to individuals in navigating the health care  
19 system, including accessing health care  
20 facilities, appointments, and follow-up care; and



1 (B) Provide guidance and support for individuals in  
2 managing chronic conditions, medication  
3 adherence, and lifestyle modifications for  
4 improved health outcomes;

5 (3) Cultural competency and advocacy:

6 (A) Community health workers shall demonstrate  
7 cultural sensitivity and competence in their  
8 interactions with diverse populations within  
9 their community; and

10 (B) Advocate for the health needs and concerns of  
11 community members to health care providers,  
12 institutions, and policymakers; and

13 (4) Data collection and reporting:

14 (A) Community health workers shall maintain accurate  
15 records of educational activities and individual  
16 interactions; and

17 (B) Submit periodic reports on community health  
18 trends, needs, and program effectiveness to  
19 relevant health authorities or agencies.

20 (c) The services of the pilot program pursuant to this  
21 section shall be provided by community health workers who shall



1 be recruited, trained, assigned, and supervised by an entity  
2 contracted by the department of health to organize and implement  
3 the pilot program.

4 (d) The department of health shall enter into a contract  
5 with a nonprofit organization to recruit, train, and supervise  
6 community health workers and to oversee the pilot program;  
7 provided that existing department of health personnel may be  
8 assigned to fulfill administrative and fiscal responsibilities  
9 of the pilot program. Any nonprofit organizations contracted  
10 under this subsection shall have:

11 (1) A history of providing community empowerment, capacity  
12 building, collaborative partnerships, and health  
13 education to the Ka'ū community;

14 (2) The knowledge and experience necessary to provide  
15 community health worker services to program  
16 participants; and

17 (3) A board of directors and staff team consisting of a  
18 majority of residents currently residing in Ka'ū,  
19 Hawai'i county.

20 (e) With the assistance of the nonprofit organization  
21 contracted under subsection (d), the department of health shall



1 submit annual reports on the development and administration of  
2 the Ka'ū community health worker pilot program, including any  
3 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty  
4 days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2025,  
5 2026, and 2027. The report shall include a record of pilot  
6 program activities and accomplishments, including:

- 7 (1) Outreach and training of community health workers; and
- 8 (2) Services provided to program participants by a  
9 community health worker.

10 (f) The department of health shall submit a final report  
11 on the Ka'ū community health worker pilot program, including any  
12 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty  
13 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028. The  
14 report shall include:

- 15 (1) A record of pilot program activities and  
16 accomplishments, including:
  - 17 (A) Outreach and training of community health  
18 workers; and
  - 19 (B) Services provided to program participants by a  
20 community health worker; and



1 (2) A recommendation on whether to extend the program  
2 beyond three years.

3 (g) For the purposes of this section:

4 "Community health worker" means a frontline health worker  
5 who is a trusted member of the community in which the community  
6 health worker lives, is from the community, or who has an  
7 unusually close understanding of the community served that  
8 enables the community health worker to:

9 (1) Build trusted relationships;

10 (2) Serve as a liaison between health and social services  
11 and the community;

12 (3) Facilitate access to services; and

13 (4) Improve the quality and cultural competence of service  
14 delivery.

15 "Program participant" means a resident of Ka'ū, Hawai'i  
16 county, who requests services by a community health worker  
17 through the Ka'ū community health worker pilot program.

18 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of  
19 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,  
20 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the  
21 appropriations contained in Act 164, Regular Session of 2023,





# S.B. NO. 2483

**Report Title:**

DOH; Community Health Workers; Pilot Program; Preventative Services; Social Determinants of Health; Hawaii County; Expenditure Ceiling; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Health to administer a three-year pilot program to authorize community health workers to provide outreach, education, training, and navigation of services to address the social determinants of health in Kau, Hawaii County. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Makes an appropriation.

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