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### **Awareness Week Resolution Highlights Congress's Support for Community Health Workers**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, - Last month, Senator Bob Casey, Jr. and Representative Raul Ruiz, M.D. introduced a resolution formally recognizing the week of August 26-30, 2024, as the second annual National Community Health Worker Awareness Week. This resolution (S.Res. 771 / H.Res. 1389), co-sponsored by Representative Jennifer McClellan and Senators Richard Blumenthal, Sherrod Brown, Kirsten Gillibrand, Mazie Hirono, and Alex Padilla, acknowledges the essential role community health workers (CHWs) play in promoting public health and advancing health equity.

"Community health workers play a crucial role in our healthcare system, connecting individuals with essential services and support right in their neighborhoods. Their commitment to addressing local health needs is fundamental to building stronger, healthier communities," said Congressman Raul Ruiz MD (CA-25). "That is why I introduced a resolution to commemorate National Community Health Worker Awareness Week to be celebrated from August 26-30, 2024."

National Community Health Worker Awareness Week, developed by the National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW), aims to encourage CHWs and allies across the United States to celebrate, commemorate, and collaborate with each other and to raise awareness of the diversity of the CHW profession, workforce, and movement. Last year, over 80 organizations participated in the inaugural event. This year, organizations across the country will host events, workshops, and outreach activities to increase awareness and engagement among communities and decision-makers.

"I'm thrilled that Senator Casey, Representative Ruiz and other legislators are taking time to thank CHWs during our second annual CHW Awareness Week. CHWs are proven to reduce cost, increase access and improve quality in healthcare and systems for individuals and families and communities, said Denise Octavia Smith, CHW and the Inaugural Executive Director of the National Association of Community Health Workers. "For over six decades in the U.S., CHWs have served as trusted professionals who help people get past barriers and find the services and support they need to achieve their health and well-being goals. And we do this with compassion, dignity and respect for everyone!"

CHWs are frontline public health workers who have strong connections to the communities they serve, allowing them to help provide coordinated, high-quality health care and social services that are tailored to the communities that need them most. In rural communities and areas impacted by health workforce shortages, CHWs fill gaps and connect people to lifesaving health and social services.

"CHWs play a crucial role in PIH's approach to fostering equitable health systems both in the U.S. and globally. PIH enthusiastically supports National Community Health Worker Awareness Week. We deeply appreciate the leadership of the resolution's cosponsors and the National Association of Community Health Workers in honoring the remarkable contributions of community health workers in serving our communities," said Katie Bollbach, Executive Director, Partners In Health United States (PIH-US).

In March, CHWs and their allies from across the country met with over 80 Congressional offices advocating for this resolution in a Hill Day co-coordinated by NACHW and PIH-US. Its introduction in the House and Senate provides additional recognition and awareness of CHWs and celebrates their essential roles in community and public health. It is crucial that decision-makers continue to recognize, elevate, and invest in CHWs as a vital workforce, whose unique skills and positions are indispensable to the country's health and wellbeing. The National Association of Community Health Workers, Partners In Health, and organizations nationwide urge all stakeholders, decision-makers, and public and private entities to respect, empower, and collaborate with CHWs. For more information, visit [www.nachw.org](http://www.nachw.org).

### **About the National Association of Community Health Workers**

Founded in April 2019 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, NACHW is the only national membership driven organization that unifies CHWs across geography, race, ethnicity, sector, experience, and identity to support communities to achieve health, equity, and social justice. NACHW is a national voice for CHWs, including Community Health Representatives (CHRs) from tribal nations, Promotoras(es) de Salud, Peers, and hundreds of other workforce titles. NACHW promotes and advocates for the values of CHW self-determination, integrity, and social justice. We facilitate national and state policy discussions, advance CHW professional identity and authentic workforce integration, and amplify CHW leadership and capacity. We have over 2,500 members who represent diverse languages, cultures, geographies and lived experiences who hail from all 50 states and a growing number of tribes and territories. NACHW's Executive Director is a CHW, Patient Navigator, and survivor of a rare chronic disease. Our organization is governed by a national Board of Directors of predominantly CHWs, Promotoras(es) de Salud, CHRs from tribal nations, and CHW allies. Our board members have decades of research and practice expertise in CHW training and workforce development; community organizing and

engagement; intervention design, equity, and social justice advocacy; and policy leadership. Learn more at [www.nachw.org](http://www.nachw.org)



### **About Partners In Health United States**

PIH United States (PIH-US) is the U.S. arm of Partners In Health, a nonprofit, social justice organization. PIH was founded more than 30 years ago in Haiti and now works in 11 countries around the world, accompanying governments and communities to build stronger health systems and improve access to high quality care. PIH-US works shoulder to shoulder with public health departments, community organizations and advocates to achieve their long-term visions for healthier communities and more just systems. Learn more at [www.pih.org/united-states](http://www.pih.org/united-states)

