

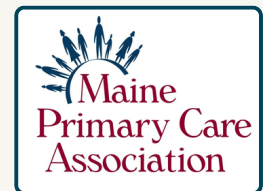
# CHC AMBASSADOR NEWSLETTER

## COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS: A CORE PART OF THE CHC MISSION

The official establishment of Community Health Centers (CHCs) arose from the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The Office of Economic Opportunity established “neighborhood health centers” to provide access to health and social services for medically underserved populations. Health center staff came from the community, understanding the importance of the local knowledge they would bring to the work. From the beginning, the role of a Community Health Worker (CHW) has been a core part of the philosophy of how a Community Health Center delivers care and supports their community.

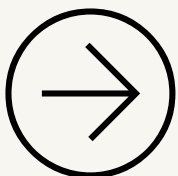
CHW is an umbrella term and includes community health representatives, *promotores*, peers and other workforce members who are frontline public health professionals that share life experience, trust, compassion, cultural, and value alignment with the communities where they live and serve. As each CHC provides services that are unique to the needs of their community, the role of a CHW can look different at each health center.

At NACHC’s recent Conference for Agricultural Worker Health, NACHC’s President and CEO Dr. Kyu Rhee said he wants to see a community health worker on every primary care team. The Maine CHC network is excited to be part of this movement. At MPCA, we work toward this goal by helping CHCs share best practices within the network and support the integration of CHWs into the health center workforce.



## SAVE THE DATE FOR NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

Every August, CHCs across Maine and the country come together to celebrate with patients, staff, and community members. We look forward to sharing details of local events in our upcoming summer newsletters.



## TAKE ACTION TODAY

**Join Retweet of the Week!** Each week, the Health Center Advocacy Network will email you a new tweet to share on your feed. With the click of a button, you'll be helping to amplify the health center message on social media by spreading the word to your family, friends, neighbors, and more about our most important and pressing priorities. Sign up [here](#).

# MAINE MOBILE HEALTH PROGRAM: SUPPORTING MAINE'S AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

***MMHP is Maine's only agricultural worker health organization, providing culturally inclusive care and services across the state to agriculture and aquaculture workers, seafood processors, and their families. Hannah Miller, MMHP's Director of Outreach, shared how CHWs are a core part of the health center's workforce..***



## **How are CHWs integrated into the care team at Maine Mobile?**

Community Health Workers are at the center of MMHP's model, integrated throughout the care we offer. Each patient starts with a CHW who registers them and asks about their health needs and social drivers of health. They help patients identify their strengths and resources and overcome challenges and barriers to accessing care and achieving their health goals.

## **What can a day at work look like for a CHW?**

Our CHWs spend most of their time out in the community with patients. For example, they will pick up a patient in the morning, transport them to their appointment, assist with interpretation at the clinic, stop by the pharmacy with the patient, and help review their diabetes medication instructions on the drive home. They also staff our mobile clinics, including driving the mobile units to farmworker camps, registering patients for their appointments, and working in the exam room interpreting and facilitating communication between patients and providers.

## **What obstacles are facing the CHW workforce?**

Structurally, CHWs need fair compensation, ongoing funding to stabilize employment opportunities, better benefits, and recognition at the federal policy level for their contributions to care teams. On an individual level, CHWs need support to address the burnout, compassion fatigue, and racism they might experience.

## **Any advice for individuals who are interested in becoming a CHW?**

Members from the [Maine CHW Initiative](#) would be happy to talk with anyone interested in learning more about becoming a CHW. MCD Global Health's [CHW Core Competency](#) training is also a great place to start. Think about where you might like to work; CHW programs exist in urban and rural parts of Maine, in community- and ethnic-based organizations, health centers, hospitals, local public health departments, and other settings.

## **How can CHC Ambassadors support the work of CHWs?**

Start by educating yourself about the CHWs in your area, invite them to share their experiences, and advocate for initiatives that support these individuals and their profession.



*Maine Mobile Health Program Team Members. From left to right, Yessenia Argudo (CHW), Lourdes Rodriguez (CHW), Patty McKenna (RN), Laura Ochoa (CHW), and Wendell Lindor (CHW).*

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION

### Maine State House

In April, the Legislature passed a \$430 million supplemental budget that included MPCA's priority legislation, [LD 2175](#), allocating \$4 million to establish a grant program to improve access and expand pharmacy services in Maine through direct investment in CHCs. Funding was also provided for other MPCA priorities including mental and public health services, education, child care, housing, and the Medicare Savings Program. All testimony from the current session can be found [here](#). Thank you for your support of Maine CHCs this session!

### Federal Funding

The FY24 Appropriations process concluded in March 2024 and provided increased funding for CHCs, Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program (THC-GME) and the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) through December 31, 2024, backdating to the beginning of FY24.

- Community Health Centers will receive a \$270 million increase in annual funding to \$4.27 billion.
- THC-GME funding levels will increase from \$126.5 million for FY24 to \$219 million through the end of the calendar year.
- NHSC funding will increase by \$35 million to rise to \$345 million per year.

## CHCs IN THE NEWS

### St. Croix Regional Family Health Center

SCRFHC announced the retirement of Executive Director Corinne LaPlant in May. LaPlant is a tremendous leader who served SCRFHC for 21 years, the last 13 as ED. Dr. Michael Farrell, DC, MBA, has been appointed as the incoming ED.

### Greater Portland Health

The Portland Press Herald [reported](#) on the amazing work that GPH does operating a clinic inside Portland's homeless shelter to provide access to a medication-assisted treatment program for opioid use disorder.

### Fish River Rural Health

FRRH partnered with the University of Maine at Fort Kent's [Bengals Executive](#) initiative to provide experiential learning opportunities to students.

### Pines Health Services

Pines officially reopened their Washburn location in April. The [Washburn Health Center](#) provides primary care and lab services.

### HealthReach Community Health Centers

Dr. Stacey Anderson has [joined](#) the team at the Madison Area Health Center. Her background includes extensive experience in OB/GYN and women's health. HealthReach also [announced](#) a new partnership with The MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence (CTI) to expand tobacco treatment services by providing staff with enhanced skills and resources.

## SHARE YOUR WHY

Use your voice and experiences to share, inspire, and motivate Members of Congress and your peers to protect Community Health Centers. Visit the Health Center Advocacy Network and record a video today.

[SHARE YOUR STORY HERE](#)

## MPCA SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us online to stay up to date on the latest news across the CHC network.



Maine Primary Care Association



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## READING CORNER

Leslie Lorentzen, our Workforce Program Manager, recommends this interview with Dr. Madeleine Ballard, CEO of Community Health Impact Coalition. Though the conversation stretches beyond the U.S., the themes tie to the work that CHWs do every day in Maine.

[Community Health Warriors:  
Elevating the Unsung Heroes of  
Healthcare](#)

# MPCA'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER NETWORK

