

2026 -- H 8211

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LC005331
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER INITIATIVE

Introduced By: Representatives Kislak, McGaw, Cruz, Ajello, Donovan, Alzate, Diaz,
Furtado, Cortvriend, and Tanzi

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

1 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) runs a statewide
2 Community Health Worker (CHW) initiative focused on training, deploying, and integrating
3 CHWs into public-health and clinical teams to advance health equity and resilience. This effort is
4 anchored in a CDC-funded “Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient
5 Communities” grant awarded to RIDOH in 2021; and

6 WHEREAS, The CHW trains workers in core competencies, including public-health
7 basics, pandemic response, emergency preparedness, health-system navigation, and addressing
8 social determinants of health; and

9 WHEREAS, The initiative employs trained CHWs to priority populations -- especially
10 communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 -- to support outreach, testing,
11 vaccination, care coordination, and chronic-disease management; and

12 WHEREAS, The initiative actively promotes health-equity goals by embedding CHWs
13 within RIDOH’s “Rhode to Equity” (R2E) initiative and by creating leadership opportunities for
14 CHWs (including a dedicated lead-CHW consultant role statewide); now, therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of money in the treasury not
16 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2026-2027, the sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000)
17 to the Rhode Island Department of Health Community Health Worker Initiative; and the state
18 controller is hereby authorized and directed to draw their orders upon the general treasurer for the
19 payment of said sum, or so much thereof as may be from time to time required, upon receipt of

1 properly authenticated vouchers. This appropriation shall be used to support a program to place
2 community health workers at libraries or other community-based organizations to support
3 community and individual resilience. The program shall collaborate and coordinate with local
4 communities, community health worker networks and associations, and other Rhode Island CHW
5 initiatives, including rural health, Olmstead Plan, Health Equity Zones, Maternal Health
6 Initiatives, CHW Voices for Leadership and Advocacy, Alliance for CHW employers and shall
7 fund anchor community-based organizations: (1) To hire, employ and supervise CHWs; (2) To
8 develop and support the CHW workforce; and (3) To evaluate the program support sustainability.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER INITIATIVE

- 1 This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$10,000,000 to the
- 2 Rhode Island Department of Health Community Health Worker Initiative.

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