

# HB615 INTRODUCED



1 HB615  
2 6YN2L13-1  
3 By Representative Hassell  
4 RFD: Health  
5 First Read: 24-Apr-25



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would provide for the certification of community health workers and training programs for those community health workers by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

This bill would also provide for a Community Health Workers Review Board and certification program, a hearing process, and the adoption of rules for implementation.

A BILL  
TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

Relating to the Alabama Department of Public Health; to add Chapter 7B to Title 22, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide for the certification of community health workers and training programs by the department; to create and provide for the membership and duties of a Community Health Workers Review Board; to provide for the creation of a Community Health Workers Certification Program within the department; to provide for a hearing process for violations; and to provide for the adoption of rules.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:



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29 Section 1. Chapter 7B is added to Title 22 of the Code  
30 of Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

31 §22-7B-1 Short title.

32 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the  
33 Community Health Worker Certification Act.

34 §22-7B-2 Definitions.

35 (a) For the purposes of this chapter, "community health  
36 worker" means a frontline public health worker who is a  
37 trusted member or has an unusually close understanding of the  
38 community served. This trusting relationship enables the  
39 community health worker to serve as a liaison, link, and  
40 intermediary between health and social services and the  
41 community to facilitate access to services and improve the  
42 quality and cultural competence of service delivery. A  
43 community health worker also builds individual and community  
44 capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency  
45 through a range of activities including, but not limited to,  
46 outreach, community education, informal counseling, social  
47 support, and advocacy. A community health worker shall have  
48 all of the following core competencies:

- 49 (1) Communication skills.
- 50 (2) Interpersonal skills and relationship building.
- 51 (3) Service coordination and navigation skills.
- 52 (4) Capacity-building.
- 53 (5) Advocacy.
- 54 (6) Presentation and facilitation skills.
- 55 (7) Organizational skills and cultural competency.
- 56 (8) Public health knowledge.



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57 (9) Understanding of health systems and basic diseases.

58 (10) Behavioral health issues.

59 (11) Field experience.

60 (b) Nothing in this definition shall be construed to  
61 authorize a community health worker to provide direct care or  
62 treatment to any individual or to perform any act or service  
63 for which a license issued by a professional licensing board  
64 is required.

65 §22-7B-3 Community health worker training.

66 (a) Community health workers shall be provided with  
67 multi-tiered academic-based and community-based training  
68 opportunities that lead to the mastery of community health  
69 worker core competencies.

70 (b) For academic-based training programs, the Alabama  
71 Department of Public Health shall collaborate with the State  
72 Department of Education, the Alabama Community College System,  
73 and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to develop a  
74 process to certify academic-based training programs that  
75 students may attend to obtain individual community health  
76 worker certification. Certified training programs shall  
77 reflect the approved core competencies and roles for community  
78 health workers.

79 (c) For community-based training programs, the Alabama  
80 Department of Public Health shall collaborate with a statewide  
81 association representing community health workers to develop a  
82 process to certify community-based programs that students may  
83 attend to obtain individual community health worker  
84 certification.



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85 (d) Community health workers may need to undergo  
86 additional training including, but not limited to, asthma,  
87 diabetes, maternal child health, behavioral health, and social  
88 determinants of health training. Multi-tiered training  
89 approaches shall provide opportunities that build on each  
90 other and prepare community health workers for career pathways  
91 both within the community health worker profession and within  
92 allied professions.

93 §22-7B-4 Community Health Workers Review Board.

94 (a) A Community Health Workers Review Board is  
95 established to advise the Alabama Department of Public Health  
96 in developing a Community Health Worker Certification Program.  
97 The scope of the program includes rules certifying  
98 individuals, including those being grandfathered in, and  
99 academic-based and community-based training programs.

100 (b) The review board shall recommend standards, review  
101 proposed rules, and provide feedback regarding training  
102 programs and reimbursement schedules.

103 (c) The review board shall be cochaired by a  
104 representative of the Alabama Department of Public Health and  
105 a representative from a statewide association of community  
106 health workers. Additional members of the review board shall  
107 include the following:

108 (1) The State Health Officer, or his or her designee.

109 (2) The Commissioner of the State Department of Human  
110 Resources, or his or her designee.

111 (3) The Commissioner of the Department of Senior  
112 Services, or his or her designee.



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113           (4) One member from the Governor's Office appointed by  
114 the Governor.

115           (5) Three members appointed by the President Pro  
116 Tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall be a representative  
117 of a statewide association of community health workers.

118           (6) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
119 Senate.

120           (7) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House  
121 of Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of a  
122 statewide association of community health workers.

123           (8) One member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
124 House of Representatives.

125           (9) Additional members, as determined and appointed by  
126 the State Health Officer to balance the representation from  
127 the community health workers workforce, community health  
128 worker employers, community health workers training and  
129 educational institutions, and community members who are  
130 recipients of services.

131           (d) The appointing authorities shall coordinate their  
132 appointments to assure the review board membership is  
133 inclusive and reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban,  
134 rural, and economic diversity of the state.

135           (e) The review board shall meet quarterly and in  
136 compliance with the Alabama Open Meetings Act, Chapter 25A of  
137 Title 36. The legislative members of the review board shall be  
138 entitled to their legislative compensation, per diem, and  
139 travel expenses for each day they attend a meeting of the  
140 review board in accordance with Section 49 of the Constitution



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141 of Alabama of 2022. The nonlegislative members of the review  
142 board shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed  
143 for necessary expenses incurred in attending meetings of the  
144 review board pursuant to the policies of their respective  
145 appointing authorities.

146 (f) The Alabama Department of Public Health shall  
147 provide administrative support to the review board.

148 (g) The review board shall submit an annual report to  
149 the Governor and the Legislature summarizing the progress of  
150 the program. The first annual report of the review board shall  
151 be submitted to the Governor and the Chairs of the Senate  
152 Healthcare and the House of Representatives Health Committees  
153 one year after the review board's organizational meeting, and  
154 annually thereafter.

155 §22-7B-5 Community Health Worker Certification Program.

156 (a) There is created within the Alabama Department of  
157 Public Health the Alabama Community Health Worker  
158 Certification Program. The department shall serve as the  
159 program's administrative and regulatory body with the advice  
160 and recommendation of the Community Health Workers Review  
161 Board. This includes the development and oversight of initial  
162 community health worker certification and certification  
163 renewals for both individuals and academic-based and  
164 community-based training programs. The review board shall  
165 advise on a certification process and may advise on training  
166 from community-based organizations, in conjunction with a  
167 statewide association of community health workers, and  
168 academic institutions, in consultation with the State



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169 Department of Education, the Alabama Community College System,  
170 and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. The Alabama  
171 Department of Public Health shall provide administrative  
172 support to the program.

173 (b) The review board shall advise and recommend a  
174 certification process for and be authorized to approve  
175 training from community-based organizations, in conjunction  
176 with a statewide association of community health workers, and  
177 academic institutions, in consultation with the State  
178 Department of Education, the Alabama Community College System,  
179 and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. The program  
180 shall base training approval on core competencies, best  
181 practices, and affordability. In addition, the program shall  
182 maintain a registry of certification records for individually  
183 certified community health workers and a registry of certified  
184 training and educational programs. All training programs that  
185 are deemed certifiable shall undergo a renewal process, which  
186 shall be established by administrative rule. The program shall  
187 establish criteria to grandfather in any community health  
188 workers who were practicing before the establishment of the  
189 program.

190 (c) To ensure high-quality service, the program may  
191 examine and consider for adoption best practices from other  
192 states that have implemented policies to allow for alternative  
193 opportunities to demonstrate competency in core skills and  
194 knowledge in addition to certification.

195 (d) The Alabama Department of Public Health, with the  
196 advice and recommendation of the review board, shall do all of





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197 the following:

198 (1) Set reasonable fees by administrative rule for  
199 program certification, community health worker certification,  
200 and certification renewals. The fee for original certification  
201 shall not exceed two hundred dollars (\$200) and the fee for  
202 the renewal of a certification shall not exceed one hundred  
203 fifty dollars (\$150). Fees for obtaining copies and other  
204 miscellaneous fees shall mirror the fees charged by the  
205 Alabama Department of Public Health.

206 (2) Adopt rules and establish procedures for denying,  
207 granting, suspending, and revoking any certification issued  
208 pursuant to this chapter.

209 (e) The State Health Officer, after notice and  
210 opportunity for hearing, may deny, suspend, or revoke a  
211 certification or fine a certificate holder or any other person  
212 who has violated this chapter or the rules adopted pursuant to  
213 this chapter. Notice shall be provided by certified mail,  
214 return receipt requested, or by personal service, fixing a  
215 date not less than 15 days after the date of the mailing or  
216 service, at which time the person shall be given an  
217 opportunity to request a hearing. Failure to request a hearing  
218 within that time period constitutes a waiver of the right to a  
219 hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by the State Health  
220 Officer or by an individual designated in writing by the State  
221 Health Officer as a hearing officer to conduct the hearing. On  
222 the basis of any such hearing or upon default of the  
223 respondent, the State Health Officer shall make a  
224 determination specifying his or her findings and conclusions.



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225 A copy of the determination shall be sent by certified mail,  
226 return receipt requested, or served personally upon the  
227 respondent.

228 (f) The procedure governing hearings authorized by this  
229 section shall be in accordance with rules adopted by the  
230 Alabama Department of Public Health. A full and complete  
231 record shall be kept of all proceedings, including the notice  
232 of hearing, complaint, and all other documents in the nature  
233 of pleadings, written motions filed in the proceedings, and  
234 the report and orders of the State Health Officer and hearing  
235 officer. All testimony shall be reported, but need not be  
236 transcribed unless the decision is sought to be reviewed. A  
237 copy or copies of the transcript shall be provided to the  
238 review board by request, and others interested in a copy or  
239 copies of the transcript may be obtained on payment of the  
240 cost of preparing the copy or copies. The State Health Officer  
241 or hearing officer, upon his or her own motion or on the  
242 written request of any party to the proceeding, shall issue  
243 subpoenas requiring the attendance and the giving of testimony  
244 by witnesses and subpoenas duces tecum requiring the  
245 production of books, papers, records, or memoranda. All  
246 subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum issued under this chapter  
247 may be served by any person of legal age. The fees of  
248 witnesses for attendance and travel shall be the same as the  
249 fees of witnesses before the courts of this state, such fees  
250 to be paid when the witness is excused from further  
251 attendance. When the witness is subpoenaed at the instance of  
252 the State Health Officer or hearing officer, the fees shall be



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253 paid in the same manner as other expenses of the Alabama  
254 Department of Public Health, and when the witness is  
255 subpoenaed at the instance of any other party to any such  
256 proceeding the Alabama Department of Public Health may require  
257 that the cost of service of the subpoena or subpoena duces  
258 tecum and the fee of the witness be borne by the party at  
259 whose instance the witness is summoned. In such case, the  
260 Alabama Department of Public Health may require a deposit to  
261 cover the cost of such service and witness fees. A subpoena or  
262 subpoena duces tecum issued pursuant to this subsection shall  
263 be served in the same manner as a subpoena issued by a circuit  
264 court.

265 (g) Any circuit court of this state, upon the  
266 application of the State Health Officer or upon the  
267 application of any other party to the proceeding, may compel  
268 the attendance of witnesses, the production of books, papers,  
269 records, or memoranda, and the giving of testimony before the  
270 State Health Officer or hearing officer conducting an  
271 investigation or holding a hearing authorized by this chapter,  
272 by an attachment for contempt or otherwise, in the same manner  
273 as production of evidence may be compelled before the court.

274 (h) All final administrative decisions of the Alabama  
275 Department of Public Health under this chapter shall be  
276 subject to judicial review pursuant to the Alabama Rules of  
277 Civil Procedure.

278 §22-7B-6 Certification.

279 Certification is not required for the employment of  
280 community health workers.



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281 §22-7B-7 Rules.

282 The Alabama Department of Public Health may adopt rules  
283 pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure Act as  
284 necessary to implement and administer this chapter.

285 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October  
286 1, 2025.