

# HB588 INTRODUCED



1 HB588  
2 SL9D188-1  
3 By Representative Hassell  
4 RFD: Health  
5 First Read: 10-Mar-26



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would create the Community Health Worker Certification Act.

This bill would create the Community Health Worker Certification Board and provide for the membership, powers, and duties of the board.

This bill would specify the minimum core competency skills framework for community health workers.

This bill would provide for training programs offered through public K-12 career technical schools, public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, and other board-approved competency-based providers.

This bill would provide for requirements for certification of community health workers.

This bill would create the Community Health Worker Certification Board Fund in the State Treasury.

This bill would specify when certification is necessary, the proper use of the title of certified community health worker, and would provide for the denial, suspension, and discipline of the certification of a certified community health worker.

This bill would provide for the adoption of rules by the board.



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29                   This bill would also require the Alabama  
30 Medicaid Agency to seek required federal approvals to  
31 support reimbursement for certain services provided by  
32 certified community health workers.

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34

35   A BILL

36   TO BE ENTITLED

37   AN ACT

38

39                   Relating to community health workers; to add Chapter 44  
40 to Title 34, Code of Alabama 1975, to create the Community  
41 Health Worker Certification Act; to create the Community  
42 Health Worker Certification Board and provide for the  
43 membership, powers, and duties of the board; to specify the  
44 minimum core competency skills framework for community health  
45 workers; to provide for training programs offered through  
46 public K-12 career technical schools, public two-year and  
47 four-year institutions of higher education, and other approved  
48 competency-based providers; to provide for the certification  
49 of community health workers; to create the Community Health  
50 Worker Certification Board Fund in the State Treasury; to  
51 specify when certification is necessary and provide for the  
52 proper use of the title of certified community health worker;  
53 to provide for the denial, suspension, and discipline of  
54 certification of a certified community health worker; to  
55 provide for the adoption of rules; and to also require the  
56 Alabama Medicaid Agency to seek required federal approvals to



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57 support reimbursement for certain services provided by  
58 certified community health workers.

59 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

60 Section 1. Chapter 44 is added to Title 34 of the Code  
61 of Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

62 §34-44-1 Short title.

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

65 §34-44-2 Definitions.

66 For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms  
67 have the following meanings:

68 (1) BOARD. The Community Health Worker Certification  
69 Board.

70 (2) CERTIFICATION. Recognition by the board that an  
71 individual has met eligibility requirements and demonstrated  
72 competency standards established by this chapter and rules  
73 adopted pursuant to this chapter.

74 (3) CERTIFIED COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER. A community  
75 health worker who holds certification issued under this  
76 chapter.

77 (4) COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER. A front line public health  
78 worker who serves as a liaison, link, and intermediary between  
79 health and social services and the community and facilitates  
80 access to services and service delivery. A community health  
81 worker may also provide outreach, community education,  
82 informal counseling, social support, and advocacy.

83 §34-44-3 Community Health Worker Certification Board.

84 (a) There is created the Community Health Worker



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85 Certification Board.

86 (b) (1) The board shall be co-chaired by a  
87 representative of the State Department of Education, appointed  
88 by the State Superintendent of Education, and a representative  
89 of the Alabama Community Health Worker Coalition appointed by  
90 the Governor from a list of three names nominated by the  
91 board. Each co-chair shall be familiar with the community  
92 health worker model and may be a practicing community health  
93 worker. The co-chairs shall be voting members of the board.

94 (2) Additional voting members of the board, who shall  
95 each be familiar with the community health worker model and  
96 may be a practicing community health worker, shall include one  
97 member appointed by each of the following:

98 a. The Lieutenant Governor.

99 b. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

100 c. The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

101 d. The Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of  
102 Representatives.

103 e. The Senate Majority Leader.

104 f. The House Majority Leader.

105 g. The Senate Minority Leader.

106 h. The House Minority Leader.

107 (3) The leadership of the Alabama Community Health  
108 Worker Coalition shall appoint the following voting members:

109 a. Two practicing community health workers;

110 b. One individual with extensive experience and  
111 training in public health policy; and

112 c. One practicing community health worker or researcher



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113 who has used the community health worker model in his or her  
114 work.

115 d. One community member familiar with community health  
116 worker services.

117 (4) The State Superintendent of Education shall appoint  
118 two voting members.

119 (5) The Board of Trustees of the Alabama Community  
120 College System shall appoint one voting member and one  
121 nonvoting member.

122 (6) Additional nonvoting members may be appointed to  
123 the board as deemed necessary by the board to ensure balanced  
124 representation of practitioners, educators, employers, public  
125 agencies, payers, and community voices aligned with the  
126 community health worker model and consistent with this chapter  
127 and rules adopted pursuant to this chapter.

128 (7) The appointing authorities shall coordinate board  
129 appointments to ensure the membership of the board is  
130 inclusive and reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban,  
131 rural, and economic diversity of the state.

132 (c) Members of the board shall serve for terms of four  
133 years. No member of the board shall serve for more than two  
134 consecutive full terms. Vacancies on the board for any reason  
135 shall be filled by the original appointing authority for the  
136 unexpired term of office. A member originally appointed for  
137 less than a full term may serve two consecutive full terms  
138 thereafter. A former member may be reappointed after a lapse  
139 of one year.

140 (d) (1) The board shall establish and hold regular



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141 quarterly and additional special meetings for the purpose of  
142 transacting business as provided by rules adopted by the  
143 board. Notice of board meetings and the conduct of meetings  
144 shall comply with the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

145 (2) A majority of the membership of the board shall  
146 constitute a quorum at any meeting of the board.

147 (3) The State Department of Education, upon notice  
148 satisfactory to the department, shall provide adequate space  
149 for the board to meet.

150 (e) The board may select and employ an executive  
151 director who shall serve at the pleasure of the board and who  
152 shall be responsible for the administration of board rules and  
153 policies. The executive director shall be responsible for  
154 employing and supervising other support personnel as directed  
155 by the board. The executive director shall be designated as  
156 the agent for the board for service of legal process upon the  
157 board, act as its recording and corresponding secretary, have  
158 custody of and safeguard and keep in good order all property  
159 and records of the board, sign all instruments and matters  
160 that require approval of the board, and perform all duties as  
161 the board may assign or delegate.

162 (f) Members shall serve without compensation but may be  
163 reimbursed for travel and other expenses actually incurred in  
164 the performance of their duties in the same manner as state  
165 employees, subject to the availability of funds.

166 (g) The Governor may remove any member of the board for  
167 misconduct, incompetency, neglect of duty, or for any other  
168 sufficient cause.



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169 §34-44-4 Core competency skills framework.

170 (a) The board shall adopt the following core competency  
171 skills as the minimum competency framework:

172 (1) Communication.

173 (2) Interpersonal skills and relationship building  
174 skills.

175 (3) Service coordination and navigation.

176 (4) Capacity building.

177 (5) Advocacy.

178 (6) Presentation and facilitation.

179 (7) Organizational and cultural competency.

180 (8) Public health knowledge.

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

182 (10) Behavioral health issues and knowledge.

183 (11) Field experience.

184 (b) In adopting, interpreting, and implementing the  
185 core competency skills framework, the board shall align  
186 competency standards, training program requirements, approved  
187 pathways, and assessment criteria with the nationally  
188 recognized community health worker competency standards and  
189 shall incorporate updates to those standards as they are  
190 revised or replaced, through board policy and administrative  
191 rule.

192 (c) Nothing in this chapter or the core competency  
193 skills framework shall be construed to authorize a community  
194 health worker to provide direct care or treatment to any  
195 individual or to perform any act or service for which a  
196 license issued by a professional licensing board is required.



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197 §34-44-5 Training.

198 (a) Community health workers shall be provided with  
199 academic-based and community-based training opportunities that  
200 lead to the mastery of the community health worker core  
201 competency skills framework. Training may be delivered by  
202 educational institutions including, but not limited to, public  
203 K-12 career technical schools and two-year or four-year  
204 institutions of higher education, or through other  
205 competency-based, academic-based, community-based  
206 organizations, employers, providers, and instructors approved  
207 by the board.

208 (b) The board shall establish minimum requirements for  
209 community health worker training programs that mirror the  
210 nationally adopted curriculum adopted by the Alabama Community  
211 Health Worker Coalition and require demonstration of  
212 competency through instruction, applied learning, and  
213 supervised practice, including field experience.

214 (c) At a minimum, approved training programs shall  
215 incorporate the community health worker core competencies  
216 national standards as recommended by the Community Health  
217 Worker Core Consensus (C3) Project, the National Association  
218 of Community Health Workers (NACHW), the Foundations for  
219 Community Health Workers, 3rd edition, and other nationally  
220 recognized community health workers competency frameworks, and  
221 any updated versions or modules published after October 1,  
222 2026, as determined by the board.

223 (d) The board shall collaborate with the State  
224 Department of Education, the Alabama Community College System,



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225 and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to establish  
226 procedures for awarding college course credit or recognition  
227 of prior learning for training, mentorship, and continuing  
228 education completed under a board-approved program.

229 (e) Training, mentorship, and continuing education  
230 approved by the board may be offered through two-year and  
231 four-year public institutions of higher education on a  
232 flexible, non-credit or credit basis and shall not be  
233 restricted to traditional semester schedules or credit hour  
234 requirements. These offerings should be accessible throughout  
235 the year, allowing individuals to enroll and complete training  
236 at various times as needed.

237 §34-44-6 Certification.

238 (a) Certification is not required to perform services  
239 within the core competency skills of a community health worker  
240 pursuant to this chapter. An individual who is not certified  
241 may continue to work as a community health worker, subject  
242 only to the requirements of his or her hiring organization,  
243 employer, contractor, payer, or other entity.

244 (b) An employer requiring certification as a condition  
245 of employment may verify certification with the board. Proof  
246 of certification may be provided in a form and manner  
247 established by board rule.

248 (c) The board shall establish and administer a  
249 community health worker certification program. Certification  
250 is voluntary unless otherwise required by a hiring  
251 organization or payer as a condition of employment or  
252 reimbursement. The certification program shall require the



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253 applicant to demonstrate knowledge of the requirements of this  
254 chapter, rules adopted pursuant to this chapter, and the  
255 community health worker core competency skills framework.

256 (d) The board, by rule, shall provide for all of the  
257 following:

258 (1) Eligibility standards for initial certification,  
259 renewal, and recertification. Standards shall include, but not  
260 be limited to, minimum age requirements, training or education  
261 requirements, competency requirements, and ethical standards.

262 (2) Multiple pathways to certification including, but  
263 not limited to, grandfathering, which may include any of the  
264 following:

265 a. Completion of an approved training program;

266 b. Demonstration of relevant work experience;

267 c. Successful completion of an examination or  
268 assessment; and

269 d. Other competency-based criteria and verification  
270 requirements.

271 (e) (1) The board shall establish a process for granting  
272 certification to individuals who hold a current, valid  
273 community health worker certification from another state,  
274 provided that the certification requirements of the other  
275 state are substantially equivalent to those provided by this  
276 chapter and board rules. Applicants seeking certification by  
277 reciprocity shall submit proof to the board of current  
278 certification and evidence that the applicant satisfies or  
279 exceeds Alabama's core competency and training standards.

280 (2) The board may require a reciprocity applicant to



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281 complete additional training or bridging requirements and, if  
282 necessary, to demonstrate competency or to successfully  
283 complete a certification examination or assessment, or both.

284 (3) The board may enter into reciprocity agreements  
285 with other states to facilitate certification across state  
286 lines, provided those agreements uphold the standards  
287 established by this chapter. All reciprocity applicants,  
288 including those with national certification, shall also obtain  
289 certification pursuant to this chapter to be recognized as  
290 certified.

291 §34-44-7 Community Health Worker Certification Board  
292 Fund.

293 (a) There is created a separate special revenue trust  
294 fund in the State Treasury known as the Community Health  
295 Worker Certification Board Fund. All receipts collected by the  
296 board under this chapter shall be deposited in this fund and  
297 used only to carry out the purposes of this chapter. Receipts  
298 shall be disbursed only by warrant of the Comptroller. No  
299 funds shall be withdrawn except as budgeted and allotted  
300 according to Article 4 of Chapter 4 of Title 41 and Chapter 19  
301 of Title 41, and only in amounts as stipulated in the general  
302 appropriations bill or other appropriations bills.

303 (b) The board may also accept all gifts, bequests, and  
304 donations from any source whatsoever, and the gifts, bequests,  
305 and donations shall be used or expended in accordance with  
306 their terms or stipulations. In the absence of any terms or  
307 stipulations, the gifts, bequests, or donations may be used or  
308 expended for such purposes as the board may determine.



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309 §34-44-8 Use of title.

310 (a) An individual may use the title "certified  
311 community health worker" or "CCHW" only if the individual  
312 holds a valid certification credential issued by the board  
313 pursuant to this chapter.

314 (b) An individual who does not hold a valid  
315 certification credential issued by the board may use the title  
316 "community health worker" or "CHW."

317 §34-44-9 Discipline.

318 The board may deny, suspend, revoke, or otherwise  
319 discipline a certified community health worker for cause  
320 established by rule, including fraud or material  
321 misrepresentation in an application for initial or renewal of  
322 certification. Any hearing relating to an action of the board  
323 under this chapter shall be conducted pursuant to the Alabama  
324 Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 22 of Title 41.

325 §34-44-10 Rules.

326 The board shall adopt rules as necessary to implement  
327 this chapter pursuant to the Alabama Administrative Procedure  
328 Act. In addition to any other rule specifically authorized by  
329 this chapter, board rules may do all of the following:

330 (1) Establish reasonable uniform fees and fee  
331 structures for applications, renewals, and training program  
332 approval.

333 (2) Establish uniform application forms and standards  
334 for certification pathways including, but not limited to,  
335 grandfathering and reciprocity, and time frames for each  
336 pathway.



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337 (3) Provide additional requirements for initial and  
338 renewal of certification including, but not limited to,  
339 minimum age requirements and acceptable documentation for  
340 proof of training which may include certificates of  
341 completion, transcripts, or official letters from recognized  
342 training providers or certifying bodies and procedures for  
343 verifying submitted documentation.

344 (4) Provide continuing education requirements,  
345 including ethics.

346 (5) Develop a procedure and establish criteria for  
347 approving training program providers and instructors.

348 (6) Develop procedures for complaint intake and  
349 investigations.

350 (7) Establish disciplinary guidelines.

351 (8) Establish procedures for conducting audits.

352 §34-44-11 Coordination of federal approvals for  
353 Medicaid reimbursement.

354 The Alabama Medicaid Agency, in coordination with the  
355 board, shall seek any required federal approvals for  
356 reimbursement mechanisms, including a State Plan Amendment,  
357 waiver, or alternative payment model, to support reimbursement  
358 for certain services provided by certified community health  
359 workers, as permitted by state and federal law.

360 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October  
361 1, 2026.