



Testimony in Support of the Community Health Workers Bill, H. 2751

June 1, 2005

Good morning, Chairman Koutoujian, Chairwoman Fargo, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Dr. Alba Cruz Davis, and I am a board member of the Massachusetts Public Health Association and the Executive Director of the Family Van at the Harvard Medical School. I am here to testify in support of H. 2751, the Community Health Workers Bill.

The social and economic benefits of public health are well-known: public health programs save lives, reduce illness and injury, prevent costly medical expenses, and keep children in school and adults at work.

Community health workers exemplify public health at its best. CHWs are on the front lines of improving access to health care, connecting people to essential services, and ensuring that diseases and injuries are treated sooner, rather than later – and, better yet, prevented in the first place. Through outreach and education, CHWs are a vital connection to vulnerable populations, the underserved, immigrants, and many others.

Yet, the invaluable work of community health workers is under-recognized, under-appreciated, and, perhaps most significantly, under-funded. The research to be conducted through this legislation is important for closing this knowledge gap and ensuring that the crucial link provided by community health workers garners the recognition and funding it deserves.

MPHA urges the Public Health Committee to provide a favorable recommendation for H. 2751.