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HOUSE . . . . . No. 247

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Nine

An Act to certify community health workers in Massachusetts..

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Pursuant to Section 110 of Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006, which mandated recommendations for a community health worker certification program, Chapter 13 of the Massachusetts General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after Section 97 the following:

Section 98: There shall be a board of certification of community health workers hereinafter called the board. The board shall be included in the Division of Health Professions Licensure at the Department of Public Health. The board shall regulate the training and certification of community health workers and shall have the following duties:

develop and administer a certification program for community health workers, including training and continuing education requirements, adopting a system to document and recognize prior learning, mastery of core competencies, and including grandfathering guidelines for certification of community health workers practicing in Massachusetts at the time of passage of this section;

develop and administer certification programs for individuals, community health worker trainers and organizations that train community health workers, including guidelines defining training curricula based on core competencies and guidelines for additional training in specialized areas of practice;

develop, administer, and enforce provisions for granting and revoking certification for the practice of community health work and the training of community health workers;

conduct public hearings and keep records and minutes as are necessary to carry out its duties. The board shall provide a 30 day public notice of the times and places of all hearings authorized under this section, in a manner it may determine.

The board shall consist of 11 members to be appointed by the governor. One member shall be the commissioner of the department of public health, or his/her designee, who shall chair the board. Additional members shall be appointed to ensure representation of all six geographic regions of the executive office of health and human services and shall include no fewer than four community health workers selected from recommendations offered by the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers; one representative of a community health worker training organization; one representative of the Massachusetts Public Health Association; one representative of the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans; one representative of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers; one community-based CHW employer representative and one consumer representative familiar with community health worker services.

Of the first appointments three shall serve one year, three shall serve two years and four shall three years. Each appointed member of the board thereafter shall serve terms of 3 years. No

member shall be appointed to more than 2 consecutive full terms. A former member shall again be eligible for appointment after a lapse of one or more years.

The board shall, at its first meeting, and annually thereafter, elect from among its members a vice-chairperson, and a secretary. Such officers shall serve until their successors are elected. The board shall meet at least quarterly or more often upon the call of the chairman at such times and places as the chairperson shall designate.

Board members shall serve without compensation but be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties.

The board shall be supported, subject to appropriation, with a director, administrative assistant, and such other professional staff and operating expenses as are required to discharge its responsibilities under this section.