

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 586

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to promote positive health behaviors in women and children.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 14, 2007

Mr. BINGAMAN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to promote positive health behaviors in women and children.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Community Health
5 Workers Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Chronic diseases, defined as any condition
9 that requires regular medical attention or medica-
10 tion, are the leading cause of death and disability for

1 women in the United States across racial and ethnic
2 groups.

3 (2) According to the National Vital Statistics
4 Report of 2001, the 5 leading causes of death
5 among Hispanic, American Indian, and African-
6 American women are heart disease, cancer, diabetes,
7 cerebrovascular disease, and unintentional injuries.

8 (3) Unhealthy behaviors alone lead to more
9 than 50 percent of premature deaths in the United
10 States.

11 (4) Poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use,
12 and alcohol and drug abuse are the health risk be-
13 haviors that most often lead to disease, premature
14 death, and disability, and are particularly prevalent
15 among many groups of minority women.

16 (5) Over 60 percent of Hispanic and African-
17 American women are classified as overweight and
18 over 30 percent are classified as obese. Over 60 per-
19 cent of American Indian women are classified as
20 obese.

21 (6) American Indian women have the highest
22 mortality rates related to alcohol and drug use of all
23 women in the United States.

24 (7) High poverty rates coupled with barriers to
25 health preventive services and medical care con-

1 tribute to racial and ethnic disparities in health fac-
2 tors, including premature death, life expectancy, risk
3 factors associated with major diseases, and the ex-
4 tent and severity of illnesses.

5 (8) There is increasing evidence that early life
6 experiences are associated with adult chronic disease
7 and that prevention and intervention services pro-
8 vided within the community and the home may less-
9 en the impact of chronic outcomes, while strength-
10 ening families and communities.

11 (9) Community health workers, who are pri-
12 marily women, can be a critical component in con-
13 ducting health promotion and disease prevention ef-
14 forts in medically underserved populations.

15 (10) Recognizing the difficult barriers con-
16 fronting medically underserved communities (pov-
17 erty, geographic isolation, language and cultural dif-
18 ferences, lack of transportation, low literacy, and
19 lack of access to services), community health work-
20 ers are in a unique position to reduce preventable
21 morbidity and mortality, improve the quality of life,
22 and increase the utilization of available preventive
23 health services for community members.

24 (11) Research has shown that community
25 health workers have been effective in significantly in-

1 creasing health insurance coverage, screening and
2 medical follow-up visits among residents with limited
3 access or underutilization of health care services.

4 (12) States on the United States-Mexico border
5 have high percentages of impoverished and ethnic
6 minority populations: border States accommodate 60
7 percent of the total Hispanic population and 23 per-
8 cent of the total population below 200 percent pov-
9 erty in the United States.

10 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE HEALTH BEHAV-**
11 **IORS IN WOMEN.**

12 Part P of title III of the Public Health Service Act
13 (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
14 the following:

15 **“SEC. 399S. GRANTS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE HEALTH BE-**
16 **HAVIORS IN WOMEN.**

17 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary, in col-
18 laboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease
19 Control and Prevention and other Federal officials deter-
20 mined appropriate by the Secretary, is authorized to
21 award grants to States or local or tribal units, to promote
22 positive health behaviors for women and children in target
23 populations, especially racial and ethnic minority women
24 and children in medically underserved communities.

1 “(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded pursuant to
2 subsection (a) may be used to support community health
3 workers—

4 “(1) to educate, guide, and provide outreach in
5 a community setting regarding health problems prev-
6 alent among women and children and especially
7 among racial and ethnic minority women and chil-
8 dren;

9 “(2) to educate, guide, and provide experiential
10 learning opportunities that target behavioral risk
11 factors including—

12 “(A) poor nutrition;

13 “(B) physical inactivity;

14 “(C) being overweight or obese;

15 “(D) tobacco use;

16 “(E) alcohol and substance use;

17 “(F) injury and violence;

18 “(G) risky sexual behavior; and

19 “(H) mental health problems;

20 “(3) to educate and guide regarding effective
21 strategies to promote positive health behaviors with-
22 in the family;

23 “(4) to educate and provide outreach regarding
24 enrollment in health insurance including the State
25 Children’s Health Insurance Program under title

1 XXI of the Social Security Act, Medicare under title
2 XVIII of such Act and Medicaid under title XIX of
3 such Act;

4 “(5) to promote community wellness and aware-
5 ness; and

6 “(6) to educate and refer target populations to
7 appropriate health care agencies and community-
8 based programs and organizations in order to in-
9 crease access to quality health care services, includ-
10 ing preventive health services.

11 “(c) APPLICATION.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State or local or trib-
13 al unit (including federally recognized tribes and
14 Alaska native villages) that desires to receive a grant
15 under subsection (a) shall submit an application to
16 the Secretary, at such time, in such manner, and ac-
17 companied by such additional information as the
18 Secretary may require.

19 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted
20 pursuant to paragraph (1) shall—

21 “(A) describe the activities for which as-
22 sistance under this section is sought;

23 “(B) contain an assurance that with re-
24 spect to each community health worker pro-
25 gram receiving funds under the grant awarded,

1 such program provides training and supervision
2 to community health workers to enable such
3 workers to provide authorized program services;

4 “(C) contain an assurance that the appli-
5 cant will evaluate the effectiveness of commu-
6 nity health worker programs receiving funds
7 under the grant;

8 “(D) contain an assurance that each com-
9 munity health worker program receiving funds
10 under the grant will provide services in the cul-
11 tural context most appropriate for the individ-
12 uals served by the program;

13 “(E) contain a plan to document and dis-
14 seminate project description and results to
15 other States and organizations as identified by
16 the Secretary; and

17 “(F) describe plans to enhance the capac-
18 ity of individuals to utilize health services and
19 health-related social services under Federal,
20 State, and local programs by—

21 “(i) assisting individuals in estab-
22 lishing eligibility under the programs and
23 in receiving the services or other benefits
24 of the programs; and

1 “(ii) providing other services as the
2 Secretary determines to be appropriate,
3 that may include transportation and trans-
4 lation services.

5 “(d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under sub-
6 section (a), the Secretary shall give priority to those appli-
7 cants—

8 “(1) who propose to target geographic areas—

9 “(A) with a high percentage of residents
10 who are eligible for health insurance but are
11 uninsured or underinsured;

12 “(B) with a high percentage of families for
13 whom English is not their primary language;
14 and

15 “(C) that encompass the United States-
16 Mexico border region;

17 “(2) with experience in providing health or
18 health-related social services to individuals who are
19 underserved with respect to such services; and

20 “(3) with documented community activity and
21 experience with community health workers.

22 “(e) COLLABORATION WITH ACADEMIC INSTITU-
23 TIONS.—The Secretary shall encourage community health
24 worker programs receiving funds under this section to col-

1 laborate with academic institutions. Nothing in this sec-
2 tion shall be construed to require such collaboration.

3 “(f) QUALITY ASSURANCE AND COST-EFFECTIVE-
4 NESS.—The Secretary shall establish guidelines for assur-
5 ing the quality of the training and supervision of commu-
6 nity health workers under the programs funded under this
7 section and for assuring the cost-effectiveness of such pro-
8 grams.

9 “(g) MONITORING.—The Secretary shall monitor
10 community health worker programs identified in approved
11 applications and shall determine whether such programs
12 are in compliance with the guidelines established under
13 subsection (f).

14 “(h) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may
15 provide technical assistance to community health worker
16 programs identified in approved applications with respect
17 to planning, developing, and operating programs under the
18 grant.

19 “(i) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

20 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years
21 after the date on which the Secretary first awards
22 grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall sub-
23 mit to Congress a report regarding the grant
24 project.

1 “(2) CONTENTS.—The report required under
2 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

3 “(A) A description of the programs for
4 which grant funds were used.

5 “(B) The number of individuals served.

6 “(C) An evaluation of—

7 “(i) the effectiveness of these pro-
8 grams;

9 “(ii) the cost of these programs; and

10 “(iii) the impact of the project on the
11 health outcomes of the community resi-
12 dents.

13 “(D) Recommendations for sustaining the
14 community health worker programs developed
15 or assisted under this section.

16 “(E) Recommendations regarding training
17 to enhance career opportunities for community
18 health workers.

19 “(j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 “(1) COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER.—The term
21 ‘community health worker’ means an individual who
22 promotes health or nutrition within the community
23 in which the individual resides—

24 “(A) by serving as a liaison between com-
25 munities and health care agencies;

1 “(B) by providing guidance and social as-
2 sistance to community residents;

3 “(C) by enhancing community residents’
4 ability to effectively communicate with health
5 care providers;

6 “(D) by providing culturally and linguis-
7 tically appropriate health or nutrition edu-
8 cation;

9 “(E) by advocating for individual and com-
10 munity health or nutrition needs; and

11 “(F) by providing referral and followup
12 services.

13 “(2) COMMUNITY SETTING.—The term ‘commu-
14 nity setting’ means a home or a community organi-
15 zation located in the neighborhood in which a partic-
16 ipant resides.

17 “(3) MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—
18 The term ‘medically underserved community’ means
19 a community identified by a State—

20 “(A) that has a substantial number of in-
21 dividuals who are members of a medically un-
22 derserved population, as defined by section
23 330(b)(3); and

1 “(B) a significant portion of which is a
2 health professional shortage area as designated
3 under section 332.

4 “(4) SUPPORT.—The term ‘support’ means the
5 provision of training, supervision, and materials
6 needed to effectively deliver the services described in
7 subsection (b), reimbursement for services, and
8 other benefits.

9 “(5) TARGET POPULATION.—The term ‘target
10 population’ means women of reproductive age, re-
11 gardless of their current childbearing status and
12 children under 21 years of age.

13 “(k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
15 \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008, 2009, and
16 2010.”.

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