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**SENATE BILL 6498**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Becker, Fain, Rivers, Brown, Bailey, and Warnick

AN ACT Relating to training and certification for community health workers; adding a new section to chapter 43.70 RCW; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Community health workers are valuable members of health and social service delivery systems. The legislature finds that training and certification for community health workers must be established in order to most effectively utilize community health workers, and ensure they receive excellent training and support in their efforts to provide the best possible patient and client care.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.70 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The collaborative for the advancement of community health workers is created to enhance the understanding and use of community health workers. The collaborative shall be hosted and lead by the University of Washington and shall be comprised of one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate and the house of representatives, representatives from the department, one representative from the health care authority, one representative from the department of social and health services, three invited representatives from health and social service settings that may utilize community health workers, and three invited community health workers.

(2) The collaborative shall be convened by July 1, 2018.

(3) By December 31, 2018, the collaborative shall design the training and qualification requirements for community health workers which shall include:

(a) Training curriculum;

(b) Number of training hours;

(c) Methods for training including, but not limited to, online, in-person, and utilization of project ECHO (extension for community healthcare outcomes);

(d) Minimum education;

(e) Experience;

(f) Process for certification or endorsement for new community health workers and grandfathering existing community health workers; and

(g) Any other provisions the collaborative deems necessary to achieve a standardized training for community health workers in Washington state.

(4) When designing the training and qualification requirements, the collaborative must review and identify best practices from existing Washington state and Washington counties' certification and training programs which shall include, but not be limited to, King county's peer bridgers, the department of social and health services' peer counselors, and the department's community health workers.

(5) By July 1, 2019, the department shall adopt and implement the community health worker training and qualification requirements as part of a certification or endorsement program as determined in subsection (3) of this section.

(6) For purposes of this section, "community health worker" means a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison, link, or intermediary between health and social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The department of health shall conduct a sunrise review under chapter 18.120 RCW to evaluate the creation of a community health worker credential and the scope of practice of the profession.

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