

Community Health Workers Learning Collaborative (CHWLC) Meeting

March 12, 2026

9:00 to 11:00 am

In-person at Howard County Health Department, Heroes Room A,
8930 Stanford Blvd, Columbia, MD 21045

Minutes

Members Present:

Jazmine Thomas – Howard Community College
Natalie Hall – Howard County Health Department
Carla Gates – Reclaiming Health Learning Lab
Francisco Abate – Community Action Council
Kirk Rookwood – The Healthy Church
Karen Sider – Mercy Hospital
Shakia Colbert - CareFirst
Sandra Ponciano – Howard County Health Department
Reena Rambharat – Howard County Health Department
Richard Amador – Healthcare Access Maryland
Rosemarie Jiménez-Rosales – Howard County Health Department

Staff Present:

Stephanie Foster – Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition
Maribet Rivera-Brute – Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition

Topic/Agenda	Discussion	Action / Follow-up
Welcome and Introductions	Ms. Maribet Rivera-Brute welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Rivera-Brute facilitated introductions with the group.	
	Ms. Rivera-Brute announced a few changes to the agenda and stated that the information shared will be sent by email to participants. She also reminded attendees to register for the next Full LHIC meeting coming up on April 16, 2026, at 9am.	LHIC website: https://www.hclhic.org/
Member Announcements, Resource Sharing and Networking	Ms. Rivera-Brute also shared the following information: • Photovoice Event (Harpers Choice) – March 24 • Interfaith Mental Health Conference – March 25	

	• Healthy Hearth Ambassador Program – Beginning March 25 • Full LHIC meeting - April 16 at 9 am • Black Maternal Health Week 2026 – April 18 at 11 am Ms. Natalie Hall provided fliers and information about the Tobacco, Nicotine and Cannabis program at HCHD and different resources offered for smoking cessation. Mr. Kirk Rookwood provided information regarding Mental Health issues and communications launching March 21st. Mr. Rookwood also provided information regarding upcoming program to assist high school students who are looking into or interested in becoming Community Health Workers (CHWs).	
Presentations	Ms. Rivera-Brute introduced Mr. Richard Amador, Manager, Healthcare Maryland Access for his presentation on the Affordable Care Act program in Maryland (ACA) regarding affordability programs, eligibility requirements, open enrollment and special enrollment periods related to undocumented immigrants. Notable information from his presentation includes the following: • Maryland Access is available to do community-focused presentations for groups. • ACA signed into law in 2000 • ACA allowed states to establish their own state-based health insurance marketplaces and the ability to expand medical assistance programs. • Applicants can apply via Maryland Health Connection to see if they qualify for Medical Assistance • Applicants can apply to the Marketplace through the Maryland Health Connection website. • Maryland Health Connection and the Maryland Health Benefits Exchange are two separate entities, although people use the interchangeably. • Navigators (staff that used to assist people with applicants) are now called Enrollment Outreach workers. Mr. Amador reviewed the steps to apply and items needed. He	www.marylandhealthconnection.gov

also reviewed some of the benefits of working with a Consumer Assistance worker or Enrollment Outreach workers. They can assist applicants to make sense of the policy, rules and questions that are asked on the website.

- Applicants who need a paper application can request one by contacting the call center. The application will be mailed with an identifying bar code specific to the requestor.

Mr. Amador stated that anyone that is assisting an applicant with applying should always click Yes for the “Would you like to be considered for Financial Help” question.

- Medical Assistance, MA and Medicaid are three names for the same program and have been used interchangeably.
- A majority of the 50 states have chosen to expand medical assistance to low-income adults.
- Applicants apply for medical assistance, and the system will determine their eligibility for the program. If eligible, the applicant will receive their Medicaid card in the mail and then can choose their Managed Care Organization (MCO).
- If applicants do not qualify for medical assistance, the system will then see if they are eligible for the 2 other types of qualified health plans, or more commonly called a private health insurance plan. Applicants are also able to apply for health services with no assistance, such as tax credits. Over 80,000 chose to enroll in private health plans with no financial assistance.

Mr. Amador briefly explained advanced premium tax credits for applicants that qualify for private health insurance plans.

Mr. Amador gave more information on Healthcare Access Maryland:

Connector entity; houses the connector program for central region, Howard County.

Mr. Amador reviewed some of the information that clients would need to apply, like income info and birth dates of applicants, etc.

Mr. Amador explained what Shared Costs are and gave examples.

Mr. Amador provided information on the Healthy Babies Equity Act

Next steps & wrap up	(special type of medical assistance for undocumented pregnant women, in existence for 3 years now). • Clients can apply year-round as long as the applicant meets the eligibility requirements for it. • Qualifying life events (loss of employment, etc.) will trigger Special Enrollment Periods. • Open Enrollment period – November 1st – December 31st • Medical assistance applications are always backdated to the first of the month when the applicant is deemed eligible. Mr. Amador encouraged meeting attendees to visit the MDH website to view the page dedicated to upcoming changes with the medical assistance program. • Consumer assistance is available for applicants. Mr. Amador concluded his presentation and shared a flyer with more information. Ms. Rivera-Brute thanked him for the presentation. Ms. Rivera-Brute shared that National CHW Awareness Week is coming up in August 2026. Meeting participants will receive a follow-up email with more information. Next meeting will be held on June 18, 2026, at 10 am.	Email Richard Amador: ramador@hcamaryland.org
--	--	---

Respectfully submitted by LaTonya Love,
Administrative Specialist II
Bureau of Assessment, Planning & Community Engagement,
Howard County Health Department