



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Common Health Coalition Announces Awards of More Than \$400,000 Through Inaugural Common Health Challenge**

***Catalyst Awardees from 11 institutions demonstrated Community Health Worker partnerships across health care and public health organizations***

NEW YORK (April 22, 2025) – The [Common Health Coalition](#), a not-for-profit whose mission is to strengthen partnership between health care and public health, announces 11 [Catalyst Awards](#) recipients as part of its inaugural [Common Health Challenge](#). The Challenge spotlights the role of Community Health Workers (CHWs) in the broader health system. The Catalyst Awards will fund work that demonstrates the integration of CHWs in ways that strengthen partnerships between health care and public health. Each organization will receive an award of \$40,000.

“Community Health Workers are trusted professionals who build bridges between the health system and the communities they serve,” said [Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc](#), chair, Common Health Coalition. “CHWs can also serve in a less recognized, yet equally vital capacity: bridging healthcare and public health institutions. It’s this nexus that we aim to spotlight through our inaugural Common Health Challenge.”

At the center of the Challenge is a call to action for public health and healthcare institutions to deploy CHW programs that facilitate better resource, data, strategy, and information sharing between the often-siloed parts of the US health system.

“Our awardees represent communities at the vanguard of a model that ought to be the norm: CHW initiatives that cinch together healthcare and public health,” said Dr. Chokshi, “And yet, we also know the funding environment for CHW initiatives has changed dramatically since we first introduced the Challenge. The work of CHWs matters more now than ever, and we are proud to offer catalytic support for these organizations and their critical work. We hope that other funding organizations will take note and follow suit.”

In December 2024, the Common Health Coalition kicked off the inaugural Common Health Challenge, entitled [Community Health Workers: Catalysts for a Reimagined Health System](#). The Challenge supports communities throughout the U.S. in stewarding locally driven, collaborative CHW initiatives that advance the Coalition’s focus on improving partnerships between healthcare and public health.

The following 11 organizations receiving a Catalyst Award, in alphabetical order, are:

- [AIRnyc](#), New York
- [Henry Ford Health](#), Michigan
- [IMPACT Care](#), Indiana
- [MaineGeneral Health](#), Maine
- [Mní Wíchóni Health Circle](#), North Dakota
- [RIPIN](#), Rhode Island
- [South Louisville Community Ministries](#), Kentucky
- [Sueños Sin Fronteras de Tejas \(SSFTX\)](#), Texas
- [Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department](#), Washington

- [Tennessee Community Health Worker Association](#), Tennessee
- [Virginia Commonwealth University Health System \(VCUHS\)](#), Virginia

The awardees represent CHW initiatives in 11 states, spanning rural, urban, and tribal communities and operating at all levels, national, state, regional, and hyperlocal. Their work serves a broad range of populations and public health needs, from the maternal health needs of indigenous populations in North Dakota, to low-income older adults and individuals with disability in Indiana, to populations impacted by housing insecurity in Kentucky. All of the recipients are implementing partnerships between CHW programs, healthcare organizations, and public health, and have plans to strengthen and formalize these partnerships with the awarded grant funds.

"Community Health Workers have a 60-year history as a community-based workforce that effectively addresses social needs, increases healthcare access, and promotes wellness all across the United States. Yet many CHW employers experience resource and partnership constraints to sustain CHWs' roles," said [Denise Octavia Smith, MBA, CHW, PN](#), Inaugural Executive Director of the National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW), a national member association promoting the collective voice and professional advancement of the Community Health Workers workforce. "The CHC Catalyst Awards are an important step to recognize CHWs as professionals who are critical for strengthening community trust, integrating healthcare and public health, and extending the opportunity for health to all."

The Common Health Challenge was created to advance the Coalition's goal to identify, amplify and replicate the innovations already happening across the country; create a movement of organizations committed to doing away with existing siloes that hinder progress; and expanding effective work happening at the intersection of health care and public health. To that end, the Challenge also establishes a new Community of Practice, open to all organizations nominated for the Catalyst Awards, that will serve as a forum for peer-to-peer learning and sharing of key strategies for advancing partnerships within CHW initiatives.

The annual Common Health Challenge is made possible with expert advising from the National Association of Community Health Workers, HealthBegins, Courage Forward Strategies, and the Institute for Public Health Innovation.

"At IPHI, we've seen firsthand how CHWs transform lives — whether they're helping a family navigate chronic illness, connecting people to vital social services, or leading grassroots efforts to improve neighborhood conditions," said Michael Rhein, president and CEO, Institute for Public Health Innovation, the organization tapped by the Coalition to facilitate the Catalyst Awards. "With these awards, the Common Health Coalition affirms that CHWs should be central to effective and responsive health systems."

The Common Health Coalition Catalyst Award review process was facilitated by the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI) and supported by a diverse panel of experts:

- Catherine Gray Haywood, executive director, Louisiana Community Health Outreach Network (LACHON)
- Oreta Tupola, executive director, Utah Community Health Workers Association, and Community Health Coordinator, the University of Utah
- Aliyah Ali, principal, Courage Forward Strategies
- Sara Zeigler, founder and principal, Courage Forward Strategies
- Joanna Davis, senior program manager, Institute for Public Health Innovation
- Lauren Ruiz (Facilitator), senior program manager, Institute for Public Health Innovation
- Valerie McAllister, senior program manager, Institute for Public Health Innovation

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## About The Common Health Coalition

The Common Health Coalition: *Together for Public Health* brings together leading health organizations in pursuit of a reimagined health system: one in which the nation's health care and public health systems no

longer work in parallel, but hand in hand – with better health for all as the common goal. With over 200 members, the Coalition was founded in November 2023 by the Alliance of Community Health Plans, AHIP, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, and Kaiser Permanente. Former New York City Commissioner of Health Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc, chairs the Coalition, and Chelsea Cipriano, MPH, serves as its managing director. Our work is informed by an advisory council of public health and health care leaders chaired by Georges C. Benjamin, MD, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association, and J. Nadine Gracia, MD, MSCE, President and CEO of Trust for America's Health. The Common Health Coalition is hosted by the Institute for Public Health Innovation, a non-profit that builds cross-sector partnerships, promotes health equity, and works to create effective public health systems and policies that foster healthy communities. To sign up for the newsletter or learn more, visit [commonhealthcoalition.org](https://commonhealthcoalition.org) and follow on [LinkedIn](#).

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