MINNESOTA
RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

Rural Health Transformation Program

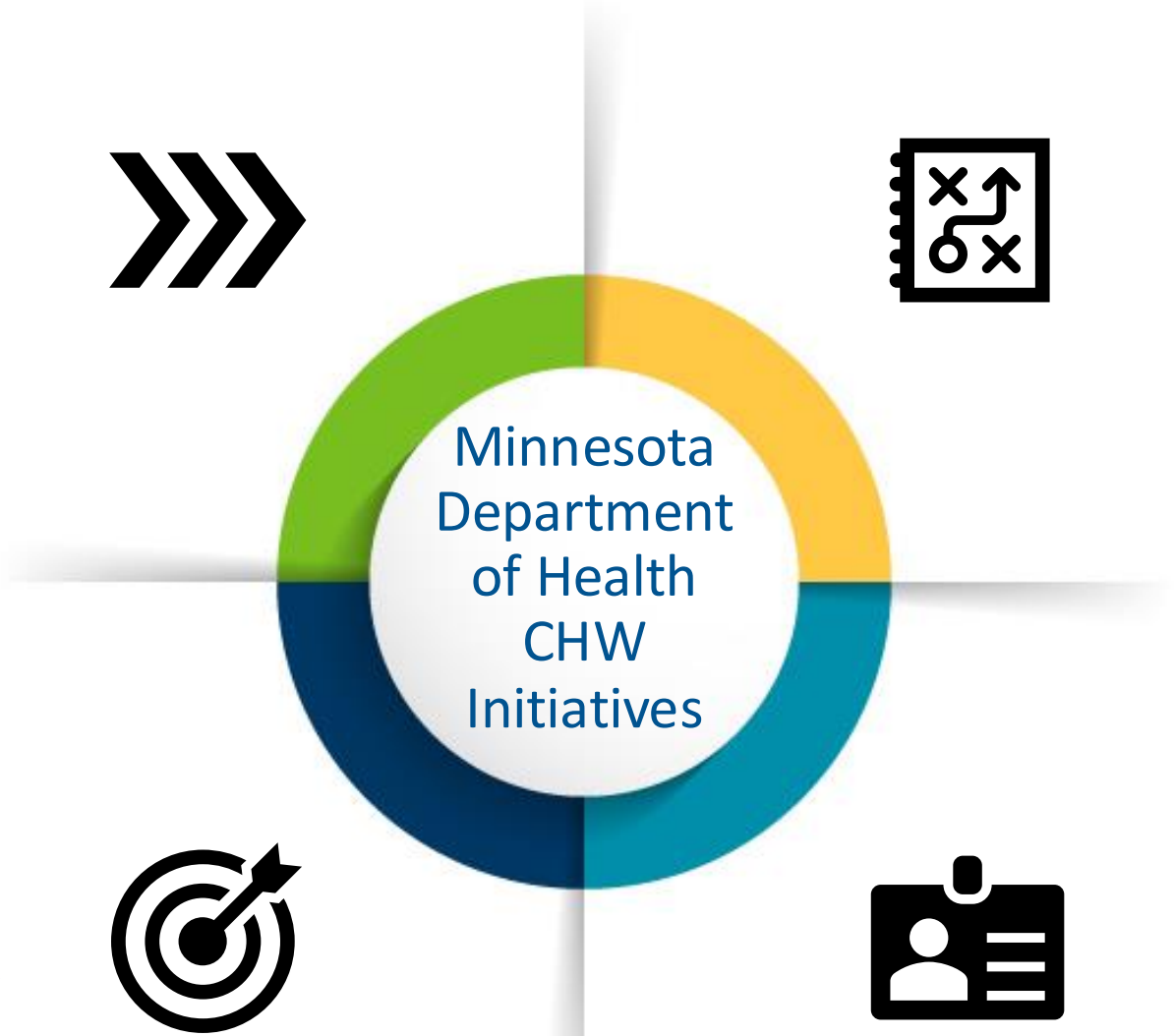
Minnesota Rural CHW Conference | October 8, 2026

Linda Kopecky and Kristen Godfrey Walters

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Purpose

MDH CHW Initiatives (CHWI) is committed to strengthening and expanding Minnesota's CHW workforce. CHWI aims to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes, and advance health equity across the state.



Goals

1. Expand a community and culturally responsive CHW workforce statewide
2. Increase access to effective CHW services
3. Build sustainable, evidence-based CHW workforce models
4. Strengthen data, evaluation, and impact measurement of CHW services

Key Strategies

1. Partnerships & Collaboration
2. Training & Workforce Development
3. Infrastructure & Sustainability
4. Evaluation & Measurement

Contact Us

health.mn.gov/CHW

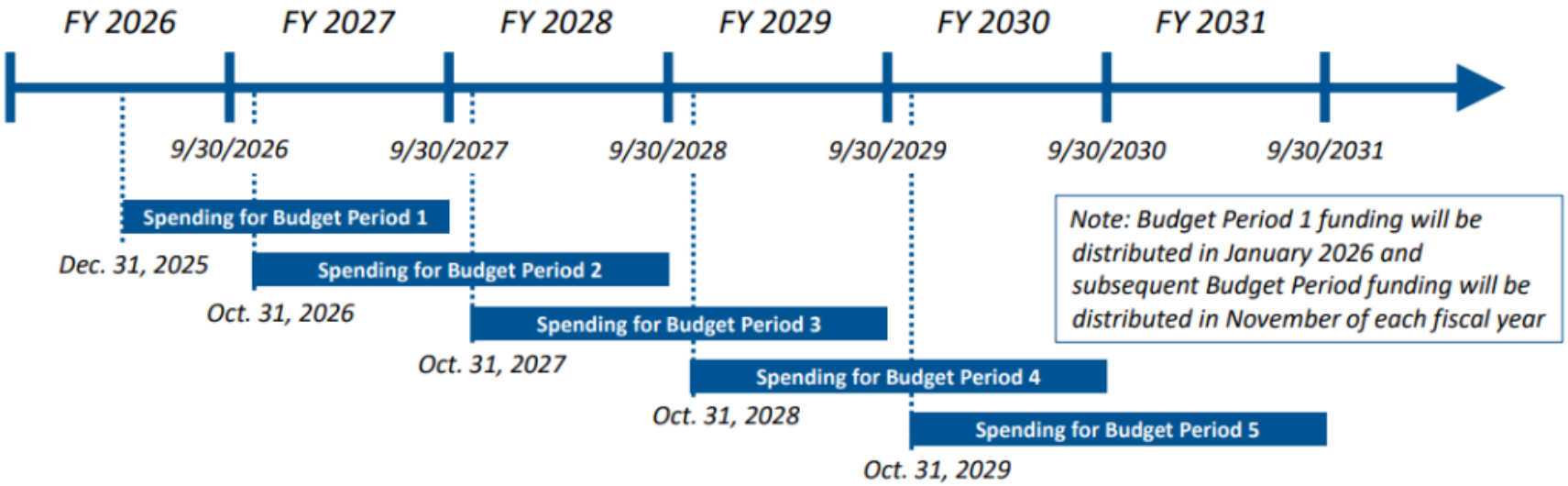
Health.chw.mdh@state.mn.us

Funding history

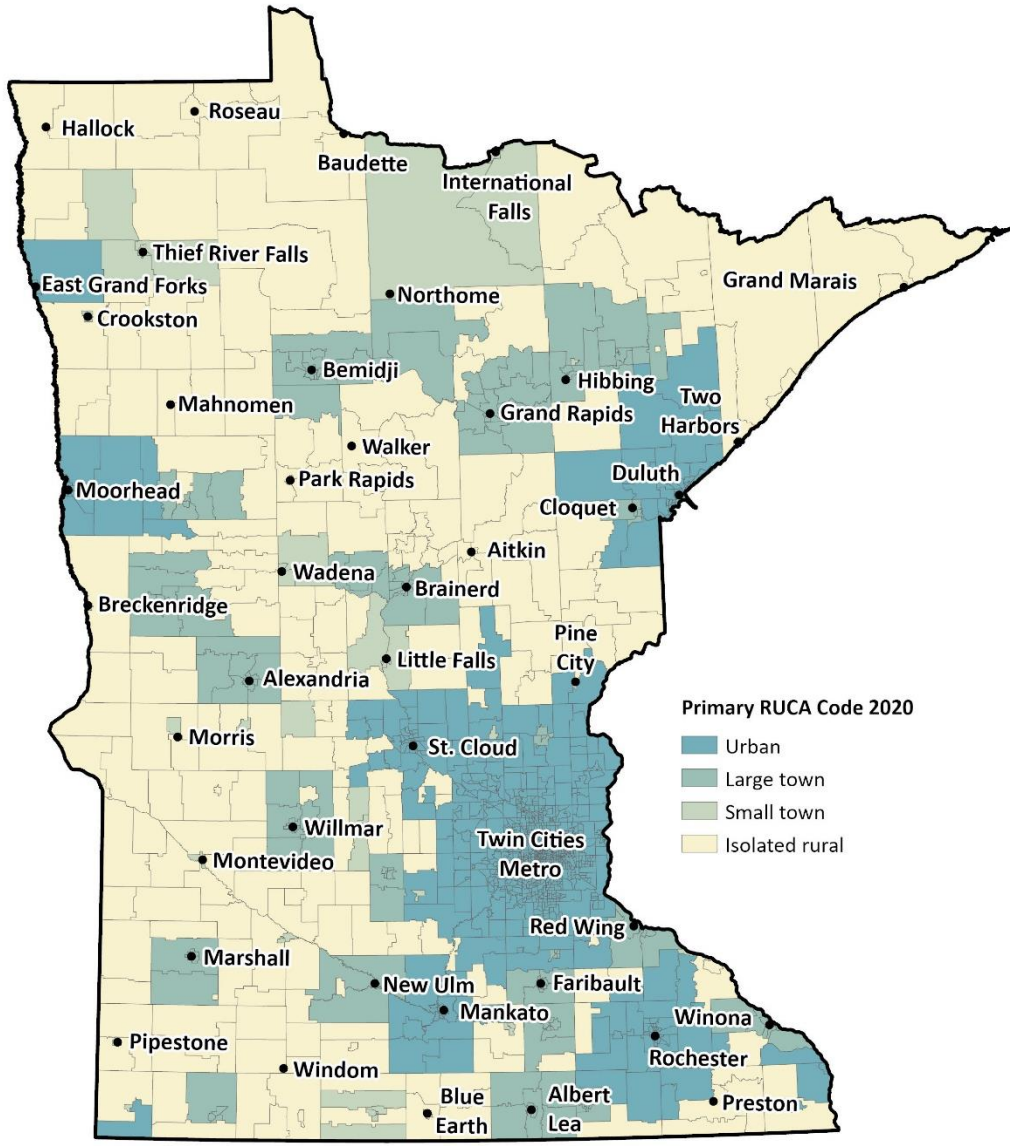
- HR1 amended section 2105 Social Security Act. Signed into law 7/4/25 → Rural Health Transformation Program
- $50 billion over 5 FYs (2026-2030) = $10 billion annually to be distributed to all 50 states each FY
- Applications were submitted to CMS on November 4th.
  - Each state was asked to submit their application for $200 million annually.
  - One application was submitted for all five years of funding.
- Awards were made on December 29. MN received $193 million.
- MDH Notice of Grant Opportunity released in March for allocation entities (hospitals, rural FQHCs, tribal governments)
  - (Rural Health Transformation Program Funding - MN Dept. of Health)

Budget Periods

- Program funding is appropriated from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 through FFY 2030.
- For each budget period, states have until the end of the following FFY.



Rural-Urban Commuting Areas (RUCAs) - 2020 Census Tract



Sources: (1) USDA, Economic Research Service 2020 Rural-Urban Commuting Area Codes data product; (2) U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2025 TIGER/Line MN census tract file; (3) U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 TIGER/Line MN place; (4) MN Department of Transportation, 1947 Boundaries of Minnesota

Minnesota Office of Rural Health and Primary Care
May 6, 2026

Strategic Initiatives



Community-based preventive care and chronic disease management



Recruit and retain talent in rural communities



Sustain access to services to keep care closer to home



Create regional care models to improve whole person health



Invest in technology, infrastructure, and collaboration for financial viability

Technology

CHW/CHR Activities

Initiative 1

- Chronic disease screening, education, referral, and follow-up
- Chronic disease self-management in clinic and community
- Physical activity, nutrition, and upstream drivers of health referrals
- Post-acute chronic disease care programs and support

Our focus is on cardiometabolic conditions – one of the goals is to increase attention to Chronic Kidney Disease screening and clinical management

Initiative 2

Develop and implement an "Earn and Train" apprenticeship program for CHWs

Initiative 3

- Provide local care delivery through telehealth access points
- **Provide local care delivery with mobile units**
- **Implement or expand models that integrate frontline staffing into care settings**
- **TA to implement or expand models that integrate frontline staffing**
- Support community-based mental health postvention programs

DRAFT- DO NOT SHARE

35 Sites Selected CHW/CHR Initiatives 1 & 3

25 Hospitals

CHW/CHR activities in clinic, transitional care, and dental mobile units

5 FQHCs

CHW/CHR activities in clinics and mobile units

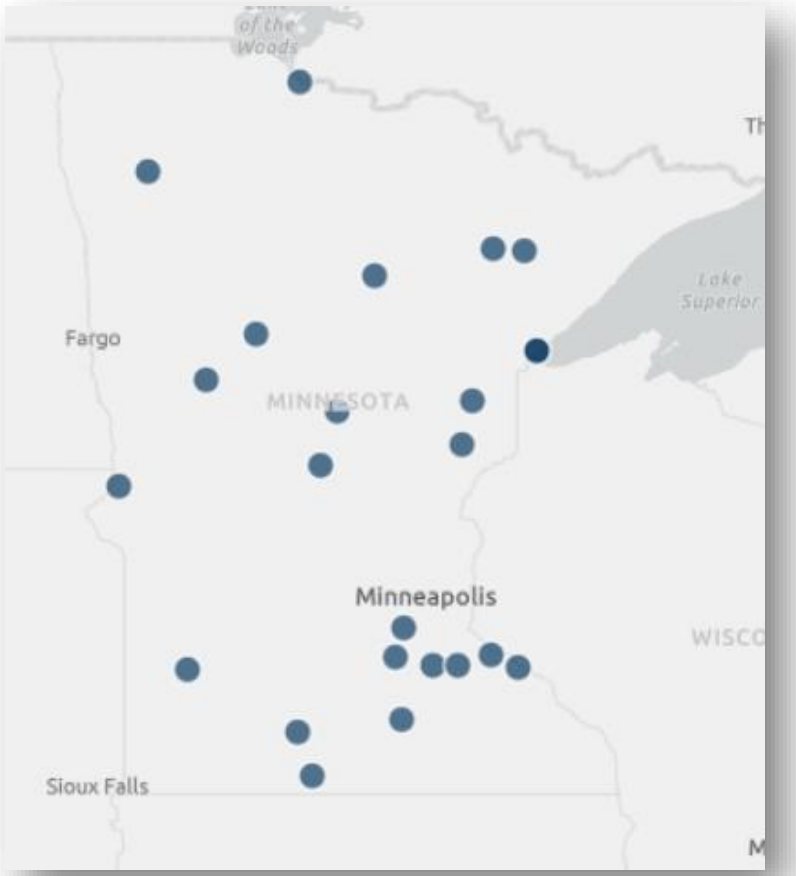
5 Tribal Health

CHW/CHRs in clinic and community settings with culturally affirming design elements

Requested amounts are not confirmed. Final grant agreements are currently being executed. These numbers may change.

CHW/CHR Sites Mapped

Hospitals



Federally Qualified Health Centers

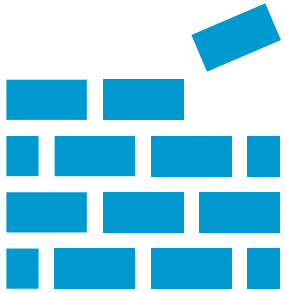


Tribal Nations



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What will be happening in the first spending year?



Model Development

Planning, organizational readiness, develop and establish administrative structures such as operating procedures and scope of practice

Identify evidence based or promising practice models to adopt and implement

Create documentation and workflows in alignment with chosen model



Hiring and Training

Create systems, documents, and organizational culture for recruiting and hiring CHW/CHRs from target communities

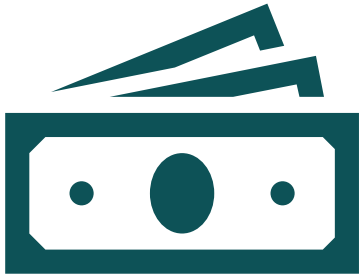
CHW Certificate Program, IHS CHR Training, and on the job training

Develop systems, processes, and communications for integrating CHW/CHRs within care teams

Measurement

Develop program and process measures for Continuous Quality Improvement

Develop outcome measures to describe impact and outcomes



Billing Systems

Create systems and structures for financial sustainability through billing for CHW/CHR services

How is the CHWI Unit at MDH supporting this work?



Support and Advise the Office of Rural Health and Primary Care



Support Planning for the Future – subsequent FY plans and engagement opportunities



Provide subject matter expertise to grantees



Create, adapt, and adopt guidance and supporting documents



Participate in all grantee gatherings

Staying engaged



Website: Rural Health Transformation Plan - MN Dept. of Health



Email: hospitals.ruraltransformation.mdh@state.mn.us



Updates: Subscribe for RHTP news



Watch for regional conversations and statewide learning communities



Submit TA requests and questions

Strategic Initiatives



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Technology