

**REGULATORY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
VIRGINIA BOARD OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

INVITATION TO COMMENT ON THE NEED TO COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

The Virginia Board of Health Professions is authorized by statute to advise the Governor, the General Assembly, and Department of Health Professions' Director on matters related to the regulation or deregulation of health care professions and occupations (see §54.1-2510 of the *Code of Virginia*). In its efforts to keep abreast of new and developing health care occupations, the Board has instituted a research project to review emerging professions periodically and to evaluate the need for regulation.

At its November 10, 2009 meeting, the Board voted to conduct a sunrise review of Community Health Workers based upon the request of Catherine Bodkin, LCSW, MSHA, VA Department of Health, Ms. Bodkin reported that approximately 4,000 CHWs had been identified through a survey of state agencies who utilize them. Further, that the CHWs are known by a variety of titles and roles and serve as a bridge between diverse cultural and language communities promoting better health. Ms. Bodkin reported that there was a need for scope of practice definitions. Arthur Garson, Executive Vice President, Provost, UVA, also presented comment regarding the need for certification of CHWs. The written comment of Dr. Garson is provided in the Attachment to this notice.

The Board will be reviewing information responsive to the standard evaluative criteria used to assess the need to regulate any health care occupation or professions in Virginia (i.e. "the Criteria"):

- (1) The risk of harm posed by the unregulated practice of the profession must be identifiable;
- (2) Specialized skills and training are needed which require assurance of initial and continued competency;
- (3) Autonomous practice exists for the occupation which requires independent judgment and functioning;
- (4) The scope of practice is distinguishable from other regulated professions, despite possible overlapping professional duties, methods of examination, instrumentation, or therapeutic modality;
- (5) The economic cost to the public of restricting the supply of practitioners and cost of board and agency operations to regulate the occupation are outweighed by the benefit to the public;
- (6) There are no alternatives to regulation which adequately protect the public; and
- (7) If regulations are required, the least burdensome level of regulation which will protect the public will be recommended.

A public hearing to receive comment need to regulate Community Health Workers in Virginia will be held on January 11, 2009 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the following address:

**Virginia Department of Health Professions
9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor Conference Center
Richmond Virginia 23233-1463**

For map and directions, the following link is provided <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/about/directions.htm>. Comments should be framed so as to respond to the issues described in the Criteria. The Emerging Professions Workplan, the Criteria, and general information describing each occupation are available for reference on the Board's website: <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/bhp/>. Comments should be framed so as to respond to the issues described in the Criteria

Written comment will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on **January 29, 2010** and should be sent to Elizabeth A. Carter, Ph.D. at the Virginia Board of Health Professions, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300, Richmond, VA 23233-1463. Comment may also be sent via e-mail to Elizabeth.Carter@dhp.virginia.gov or faxed to (804) 527-4466.