

## Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition (HCLHIC)

Community Health Worker Learning Collaborative (CHWLC)

December 15, 2025

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Howard County Health Department (HCHD)

Heroes Room A

### Minutes

#### Co-Chairs Present:

Amanda Toohey, Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center

Maria José Candanoza, Howard County Health Department

#### Members Present:

Miriam Anderson, Howard County Health Department

Yekatit Bezooayehu, Howard County Health Department

Carla Gates, Reclaiming HEALTH Learning Lab

Reena Rambharat, Howard County Health Department

Kirk Rookwood, The Healthy Church

Stephanie Reid, Howard County Health Department

Tamala Reid, Howard County Health Department

#### Staff Present:

Maribet Rivera-Brute, Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition

Stephanie Foster, Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition

Topic/Agenda	Discussion	Action/Follow-up
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	Stephanie Foster, Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition, called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.	Members are encouraged to review the past minutes available at: <a href="https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2024?catId=367">https://www.hclhic.org/home/meeting/2024?catId=367</a>

<b>Announcements</b>	<p>Stephanie Foster provided the following announcements to the workgroup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next <b>HCLHIC Quarterly hybrid meeting is on January 15, 2025, at 9 AM</b>. It will be hybrid, and refreshments will be available for in-person attendees.</li> <li>• <b>Howard County Multiservice Center Food Pantry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Food Pantry at the the Howard County Multiservice Center (MSC) has extended its food pantry hours to 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, for November and December 2025. From pre-packaged “grab and go” food bags to diapers and toiletries, we encourage Howard County residents in need to stop by the MSC Food Pantry for assistance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Aging Independently</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To find programs and services that support healthy aging, reduce isolation, and promote dignity, choice, and cultural inclusion. The office on aging and independence has a plethora of support to help Howard County resident age independently.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Members can register for upcoming HCLHIC meetings here:  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-hclhic-full-coalition-meetings-tickets-1428672962289?aff=oddtcreator">https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-hclhic-full-coalition-meetings-tickets-1428672962289?aff=oddtcreator</a></p> <p>Learn more at  <a href="https://www.howardcountymd.gov/office-local-childrens-board/multiservice-center">https://www.howardcountymd.gov/office-local-childrens-board/multiservice-center</a></p> <p>Learn more at  <a href="https://www.howardcountymd.gov/aging-independence">https://www.howardcountymd.gov/aging-independence</a></p>
<b>2025 Walktober Recap</b>	<p>Stephanie Foster provided a recap of Walktober activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025 marked the <b>10th annual Walk Maryland Day Celebration</b>.</li> <li>• Walk Maryland Day encourages regular walking, promotes physical activity, and improves health.</li> <li>• Walk Maryland Day coincides with <b>Walktober</b>, a month-long series of walking events and webinars held each October.</li> </ul>	<p>For more information about the Maryland State Walktober initiative:  <a href="https://mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=136">https://mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=136</a></p>

## Walk Maryland Day Highlights

- The number of Walktober partners increased from **20 walks in 2020** to **51 partners**, and now to **over 100 walks**.
- Throughout October, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in coordination with several state agencies and partners, sponsored a series of **90-minute webinars (“Walkinars”)** focused on walking as a core component of active transportation and public well-being.
- The number of Walktober partners has increased from 20 walks in 2020 to 51 partners to now over 100 walks.
- **Walkinars:** Engagement has increased 20x since 2020 with 1,395 clicks and registrations to now over 29,000 clicks and registrations

Ms. Foster reviewed 2025 Walktober data, comparing outcomes with previous years:

- The **2025 Walktober Challenge** included **20+ organizations, 171 walk/move events, and 100 more events than in 2024**.
- Survey response rates more than doubled, recorded participants more than tripled, and total distance walked nearly doubled compared to 2024.
- Participants reported strong enjoyment of the community aspect of the events.
- Participants had a great time and enjoyed the community aspects of the walks.

### Organizer Feedback:

- Giveaways were a major success
- High participation turnout
- Interest in Walktober t-shirts in future years

### Participant Feedback:

- Great networking opportunities
- Enjoyable group-based physical activity

	<p>Overall, the Walktober initiative positively impacted community engagement and mental health. Participants expressed interest in continuing walking challenges beyond October, with suggestions to incorporate scientific research on walking to further highlight its benefits.</p> <p><b>2025 HCHD Walktober Challenge Participates:</b></p> <p>Ms. Foster recognized the <b>2025 Howard County Health Department (HCHD) Walktober Challenge winners.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>23 HCHD employees</b> participated</li><li>• <b>5,082,085 total steps</b></li><li>• <b>2,310 total miles walked</b></li></ul> <p><b>2025 HCHD Walktober Champions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 🏆 <b>Heather Moore (Champion)</b> – 506,199 steps (230 miles; over 7 miles per day)</li><li>• 🥈 <b>Stephanie Foster (2nd Place)</b> – 486,304 steps (221 miles)</li><li>• 🥉 <b>Allysin Houle (3rd Place)</b> – 328,945 steps (150 miles)</li></ul> <p><b>2025 Howard County Village Walktober Challenge</b></p> <p>Wild Lake achieved the highest step count:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Wilde Lake</b> – 3,680,464 steps (1,672.94 miles) – <i>2025 Champions</i></li><li>• <b>River Hill</b> – 3,489,964 steps (1,586.35 miles)</li><li>• <b>Long Reach</b> – 769,093 steps (349.59 miles)</li><li>• <b>Town Center</b> – 740,529 steps (336.60 miles)</li><li>• <b>Harper’s Choice</b> – 140,848 steps (64.02 miles)</li></ul>	
<p><b>CHW Future Topics – Amanda Toohey</b></p>	<p>Amanda Toohey, Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center, led a discussion on formalizing learning opportunities for Community Health Workers (CHWs) and gathered feedback on future topics for the Community Health Workers Learning Collaborative (CHW LC).</p> <p>Proposed formats included webinars and in-person sessions. Past trainings were referenced, including a bus system navigation session and a SNAP 101 webinar.</p>	

	<p>Emphasis was placed on health literacy, cultural humility, and active listening, particularly when working with diverse populations.</p> <p>Additional discussion topics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation experienced by undocumented individuals</li> <li>• The role of Luminous in providing cultural humility, education and legal protection</li> <li>• Increased demand for food delivery services</li> <li>• The need for CHWs to stay informed about local resources</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions included developing a calendar of resource seminars to support ongoing education and collaboration. Local resources discussed included the Community Action Council and Columbia Community Cares.</p>	
<p><b>Assessments, Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) Presentation – Reena Bitner</b></p>	<p>Reena Bitner, Assessments, Evaluation and Review Services (AERS)/Nurse Monitoring Program, Howard County Health Department (HCHD), provided an overview of AERS and the Maryland Access Point (MAP) system.</p> <p><b>Key points included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AERS serves Howard County residents of all ages through in-home assessments.</li> <li>• Referrals should be made to Maryland Access Point (MAP) at 410-313-1234.</li> <li>• MAP assists with needs such as finances, meal preparation, housework, medications, transportation, personal care, and more.</li> <li>• Eligible individuals may qualify for Community First Choice and related programs.</li> <li>• Initial intake calls typically last 10–15 minutes.</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Bitner explained that Medicaid-eligible clients can access caregiver services at no cost. Caregivers may be family or friends employed through an agency. The program aims to prevent unnecessary institutionalization while ensuring safe, monitored care.</p>	

	<p>Additional discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight provided by nurse monitors</li> <li>• Approximately 1,100 clients are currently monitored in Howard County</li> <li>• Challenges faced by seniors who do not qualify for Medicaid</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Bitner also highlighted the importance of a multilingual team and thorough assessments to identify safety risks such as fall hazards. Approximately 75% of clients are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid. Attendees raised concerns about long waitlists for home-based services in Maryland and disparities compared to states such as Pennsylvania.</p>	
<p><b>Recap: Through the Eyes of a Community Health Worker – Photovoice Exhibition – Maria José Candanoza</b></p>	<p>Maria José Candanoza provided a recap of the CHW Photovoice Exhibition held on November 10 at the Elkridge Library.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All photographs and narratives were created by members of the Howard County Health Department CHW Team.</li> <li>• The Photovoice methodology captured community assets and challenges.</li> </ul> <p><b>Most Impactful Images</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety concerns: Broken glass, lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting</li> <li>• Food access: Frank’s Produce Market as a community asset</li> <li>• Barriers to public space: Park permit requirements</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for a central gathering space (“heart” of Elkridge)</li> <li>• Safer infrastructure</li> <li>• Improved Park access</li> <li>• Expanded community programming</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for sidewalks and crosswalks</li> <li>• Activate public spaces through partnerships with Howard County Parks &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• Serve as community liaisons</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Create a collaboration with Howard County Public School System (HCPSS)</li></ul>	
<b>Next Steps &amp; Wrap-up</b>	<p>The next CHW LC meeting is March 12, 2026 at 10 AM in Heroes Conference Room A at HCHD.</p> <p>Stephanie Foster adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.</p>	

Respectfully submitted by:

Stephanie Foster

Community Engagement Coordinator

Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition