

The Community Health Worker (CHW)

What are the key skills a CHW needs?

The Ministry note that when working as a CHW, they need to demonstrate key skills, including to:

- Find and gather resources for your community.
- Maintain good working relationships with community leaders, other stakeholders, and other CHWs.
- Be organised and manage your time effectively.
- Plan and carry out activities and programs with the community.
- Communicate effectively, including basic letter writing skills.
- Be a role-model for healthy behaviours.
- Build a solid support base, particularly with community leaders.

Community Engagement

'Community engagement' is a planned process of working together with the community to deal with issues affecting their wellbeing. It is *'the active involvement of people in any decisions that may affect the health of them, their families and the communities they are linked to'*.

The process of community engagement is designed to:

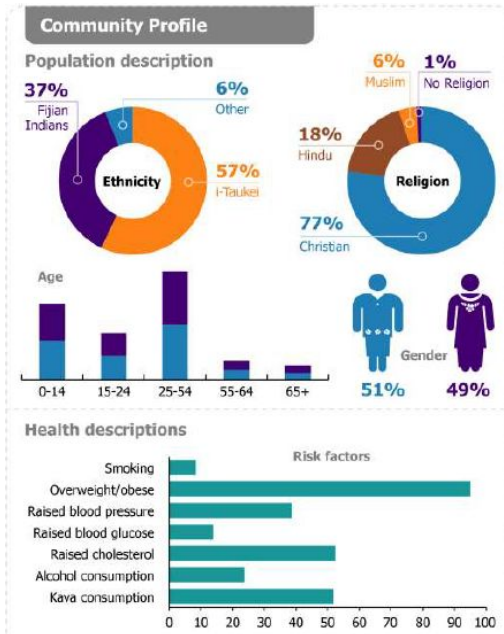
- Create transparency (i.e. an open, honest, and fair process).
- Increase community involvement.
- Promote responsibility for setting priorities.
- Encourage participation in change-related activities that come out of the process.

By being involved in the process, community members will share in the challenges of developing their community and take pride in the results achieved through engagement. The CHW is a vital stakeholder in any community. As a wellness advocate and the representative of the Ministry of Health & Medical Services, they aid 'wellness' ways of thinking during engagement activities.

A CHW can be the community's link to quality health care, health assistance, and guidance from the Ministry, health NGOs, and other stakeholders. Health is important in any community development process. The CHW can provide vital information and also ask for outside resources and assistance.

Community / Village Action Plan Documents

A community profile is information that is collected to show a summary of the conditions found in a community. This might include information about the type and condition of houses, water supply, sanitation, number of elderly or disabled children under 5 years, number of pregnant women, food supply, and school attendance. It summarises the physical and social components of the community.



A community profile is important because it:

- Provides solid background information and baseline data about the community.
- Allows each community and others to have an idea of the community's current state, which allows planning of interventions.
- Gives a clear picture of the issues that are present within the community, and identifies strengths and gaps that can be filled.
- Greatly assists the community in any planning for development, especially for creating Community Health Action Plans.

The Community Health Worker submits their monthly reports based on the community profile information, and activities conducted, to the Zone Nurses / District Nurses, who in turn report to the Team Leaders at the Medical Area Level. Information is then reported to the Sub - Divisional Nursing Managers (SDNM - Sub-Divisional Level), and finally to the Coordinator at National level.

If reports are submitted as required under the Ministry the CHW receives a monthly allowance, and their role is an increasingly important focal point for health promotion and disease prevention within communities and settings.

Monitor Impact & Promote Sustainability

The CHW plays a key role in monitoring the impacts and promoting the sustainability of activities in the community, through:

- Holding regular meetings with the community to discuss the impacts of activities.
- Creating incentives or ways of recognising achievements within the community.
- Sharing information about the changes and impacts on health and wellness in the community.
- Sharing stories and examples.
- Acknowledging when the community has worked together to achieve a planned outcome or responded to emergencies.
- Sharing knowledge and information with many, so the CHW is not alone in their work and knows that others can help when needed.

<http://www.health.gov.fj/community-health-workers-complete-training-in-basic-health-services/>

<http://www.health.gov.fj/community-health-worker-program-strengthened/>