Community Health Worker:
Core Competencies and Scope of Work

Core Competencies

Core competencies identify behaviors and skills a CHW is expected to demonstrate to carry out the mission and goals of their profession. These core competencies can help guide a CHW throughout their career and to help a CHW operate within their scope of practice.

- Communication
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Knowledge base about the community, health issues, and available resources
- Service Coordination
- Capacity Building
- Advocacy
- Teaching and Education
- Organization

Essential Scope of Work

The essential scope of work for a CHW is primary healthcare prevention and control of chronic disease among underserved populations.

Level of Prevention	Aim	Phase of Disease	Target	Intervention Examples
Primary	Widespread changes that reduce the average risk in the whole population Reduction of particular exposures among identified higher risk groups or individuals	Specific causal factors associated with the onset of disease Specific and non-specific factors associated with protection against disease	Total population, selected groups and healthy individuals	Measures that eliminate or reduce the causes or determinants of departures from good health, control exposure to risk, and promote factors that are protective of health: • Systematic immunization to eliminate communicable disease • Education programs to increase awareness of the risks of physical inactivity and poor diet to reduce the burden of preventable chronic disease • Legislation to require wearing of seat belts to reduce the incidence of death and disability associated with road trauma • Tobacco control programs

In the prevention and control of chronic disease, primary prevention for CHWs may look like the following:

Prevention and control of chronic disease

- Support to multidisciplinary health teams
- Outreach to individuals in the community setting
- Educating the patient and their families on the importance of lifestyle change; adherence to their medication regimes and recommended treatments
- Find creative ways to increase compliance with medications
- Help patients navigate the healthcare system; enrollment eligibility, appointments, referrals; transportation, promoting continuity of care
- Providing social support by listening to concerns of the patient and their family
- Helping with problem solving strategies
- Assessment of how well a self- management plan is helping the patient meet their own health goals
- Assisting clients in obtaining home health devices to support self-management
- Supporting individualized goal setting using motivational interviewing