

**PHM Health Systems Circle Webinar-The Struggles of Community Health Workers at the Covid Frontline: Essential but Unrecognised**

**Concept Note**

CHWs have been on the frontline in educating their communities about COVID-19: how to prevent it, how to manage the illness, and why vaccinations are safe and important public health interventions. Many governments - and indeed even global agencies like the WHO - have described them as healthcare heroes. Nevertheless, these heroes continue to be treated poorly. CHWs' working conditions have not improved during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite their services being needed more than ever, their contracts remain informal or short-term, they generally do not have access to employer-provided PPE, and their payments continue to be low and erratic. Like other "essential workers" in low-wage and insecure employment, CHWs have struggled to secure childcare services - something that has been needed during lockdowns where schools have closed and children are home, but parents in essential services continue working. In many countries, CHWs have had to work under circumstances characterised by high levels of militarisation, that have been aimed at policing lockdown regulations but also at stamping down popular protests that have emerged in opposition to the high levels of socioeconomic insecurity resulting from the pandemic and its management. In this webinar CHWs from across the world report on the past year: how their health care work has changed, how their working conditions have been affected, how their wellbeing has been affected, and also what strategies they have been using to organise for better employment conditions now that governments are relying on their labour more than ever!

| <b>Webinar schedule</b>  |   |   |              |
|--|---|---|--------------|
| <b>Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b>   |   |   |              |
| <b>Time: 11 AM UTC – 1 PM UTC</b><br><i>(Interpretation will be provided in Hindi, other languages will be confirmed soon)</i> |   |   |              |
| <b>S. No.</b>  | <b>Session</b>  | <b>Speakers</b>   | <b>Time</b>  |
| 1  | Introduction to the Webinar, Speakers & context setting   | Helen Schneider , University of Western Cape- Moderator   | 11am-11:15am |
| 2  | How Covid-19 exacerbated challenges faced by ASHAs of the national government-run Community Health Worker programme | Surekha (India)<br>General Secretary of the ASHA Workers Union, Haryana, State President, Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Haryana, and member of the All India Coordination Committee of ASHA Workers | 5-7 minutes  |
| 3  | Issues faced by CHWs during Covid, mobilization and advocacy for CHW safety and working conditions                  | Dickson Namsima (Malawi)<br>Senior CHW  | 5-7 minutes  |
| 4  | Community Health Agents in the Brazil's Unified Health Systems (SUS)  | Catia Calage- Community Health Agent from Brazil ( <i>Recorded Video</i> )  | 5-7 minutes  |
| 5  | Lessons from the work of Australian Aboriginal  | Karl Briscoe (Australia)<br>CEO, National Association of  | 7 minutes    |

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|    | Community Health Workers                                    | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP)  |                        |
| 6  | Gender and care work: Campaign demands and advocacy on CHWs | Kate Lappin<br>Regional Secretary for Asia Pacific<br>Regional Office, PSI &<br>Banaani Deka<br>CHW campaign coordinator, PSI<br>South Asia | 10 minutes             |
| 7  | To be added   | Two CHWs from Philippines<br><i>(Recorded Video)</i>  | 5-7 minutes            |
| 8  | To be added   | CHW from South Africa   | 5-7 minutes            |
| 9  | To be added   | CHW from Colombia   | 5-7 minutes            |
| 10 | Q&A and discussion  |   | 12:10 pm-<br>12:40pm - |
| 11 | Call to action and next steps                               | PHM representative  | 12:40 pm-<br>12:45pm   |
| 12 | Concluding remarks  |   | 12:45pm<br>onwards     |