



Frontline and Community Health Workers

Frontline and Community Health Workers can be trained on a half-day in-person module developed by Special Olympics in working with people with ID to provide them the tools and skills they need to best serve all members of the community. SOI can support any Programs interested in training frontline and community health workers.

Community health workers (CHWs) are lay members of the community who work either for pay or as volunteers in association with the local health care system in both urban and rural environments. CHWs usually share ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and life experiences with the community members they serve. They have been identified by many titles, such as community health advisors, lay health advocates, *promotoras*, outreach educators, community health representatives, peer health promoters, and peer health educators. CHWs offer interpretation and translation services, provide culturally appropriate health education and information, help people get the care they need, give informal counseling and guidance on health behaviors, advocate for individual and community health needs, and provide some direct services such as first aid and blood pressure screening.

Since CHWs typically reside in the community they serve, they have the unique ability to bring information where it is needed most. They can reach community residents where they live, eat, play, work, and worship. CHWs are frontline agents of change, helping to reduce health disparities in underserved communities. (NIH <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/healthdisp/role-of-community-health-workers.htm>)

Where CHWs Work:

- Government agencies (local and national)
- Clinics and hospitals
- Insurance companies
- Nursing care facilities
- Nonprofit groups (local and national)
- Faith and community-based organizations (local and national)

Other Resources about CHWs:

- <https://www.who.int/activities/supporting-community-based-health-workers>
- <https://www.who.int/teams/health-workforce/community>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241550369>