

Introduction to Community Based Health Care

Introduction to Community-Based Health Care (CBHC)

Key concepts, objectives, components, and implementation steps

1. What Is Community-Based Health Care?

Aspect	Description
Definition	A health care approach that delivers preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services within the community, leveraging local resources, participation, and cultural context.
Core Idea	Shift from institution-centric (hospital/clinic) models to people-centered services that are accessible, affordable, and responsive to community needs.
Scope	Includes health promotion, disease prevention, primary care, maternal & child health, chronic disease management, mental health, and emergency response.

2. Why CBHC Matters

Reason	Impact
Equity	Reaches underserved populations (rural, low-income, marginalized groups).
Accessibility	Reduces travel time and costs; services are delivered close to where people live and work.
Cost-Effectiveness	Emphasizes prevention and early treatment → lower hospitalization rates and overall health system spending.
Community Empowerment	Engages residents in decision-making, fostering ownership and sustainability.
Health Outcomes	Improves immunization coverage, maternal-child health indicators, chronic disease control, and health-seeking behavior.

3. Guiding Principles

1. **People-Centered** – Respect cultural values, preferences, and social determinants of health.

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2. **Participation** – Involve community members, local leaders, and NGOs in planning, delivery, and evaluation.

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3. **Integration** – Connect with existing health system tiers (primary, secondary, tertiary) and other sectors (education, agriculture, social services).

4. **Equity & Inclusion** – Prioritize the most vulnerable; ensure gender-sensitive approaches.

5. **Sustainability** – Build local capacity, use affordable technologies, and secure long-term financing.

4. Key Components of CBHC

Component	Typical Activities	Example Tools
Community Assessment	Mapping health needs, resources, and gaps.	Household surveys, focus groups, GIS mapping.
Health Promotion & Education	Conducting health talks, school programs, media campaigns.	Flipcharts, radio spots, mobile app reminders.
Preventive Services	Immunizations, antenatal visits, screening, vector control.	Outreach clinics, community health worker (CHW) visits.
Primary Care Delivery	Diagnosis, treatment, referral, follow-up for common illnesses.	Mobile clinics, CHW-run health posts, telemedicine.
Referral & Linkage System	Coordinating with higher-level facilities for complex cases.	Referral forms, transport vouchers, electronic referral tracking.
Community Health Workforce	Recruiting, training, and supervising CHWs, volunteers, traditional healers.	Training curricula, supervision checklists, performance incentives.
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Collecting data on service utilization, outcomes, satisfaction.	Routine registers, DHIS2 dashboards, community scorecards.
Financing & Resource Mobilization	Community health funds, micro-insurance, public-private partnerships.	Savings groups, government budget allocations, donor grants.

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5. Steps to Implement a CBHC Program

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1. Stakeholder Mapping & Engagement

- Identify community leaders, NGOs, local government, health facilities, and private partners.
- Hold introductory meetings to build trust and define shared goals.

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