## Community Health Workers Providing Family Planning

### What are the benefits?

**Expanded services benefit family planning users**
- Bring convenient services to those who cannot travel far to a facility or cannot leave home
- Help to meet need for family planning
- Increase clients’ access to other services that the community health workers may offer
- Give clients a provider who lives in their community and is familiar to them
- Give people easier access to health information

**Sharing tasks benefits clinic-based providers**
- Frees more highly trained staff to provide more expert care
- Allows more time to give each client the help and counseling that she or he needs
- Can reduce workload at the clinic

**Sharing tasks benefits community health workers**
- Offers opportunities to train and learn new skills
- Can lead to more guidance and supervision
- Expands their role in the community

### Methods community health workers can provide

- Pills
- Injectables
- Male and female condoms
- Emergency contraceptives
- LAM counseling
- Fertility awareness methods
- Spermicides
- Withdrawal counseling

### Methods that clinic-based staff provide

- All those that community health workers provide, plus:
  - Implants
  - Intrauterine devices
  - Female sterilization
  - Vasectomy
  - Diaphragms

### Tasks community health workers can do

- Counsel for informed choice
- Screen for medical eligibility
- Provide methods and offer resupply
- Counsel about common problems and side effects
- Provide information on women’s and men’s fertility
- Refer to the clinic:
  - for methods available only in the clinic
  - for management of side effects, if needed
  - to address new health conditions
  - whenever a client wants to be referred

### Tasks clinic-based providers do

- Provide methods to clients, including those referred by community health workers
- Counsel about and treat side effects
- Manage complications
- Screen for medical eligibility if clinical judgment is needed
- Address any client needs that the community health workers cannot
- Supervise and support community health workers

### What is the role of the community health worker?

- Provide high-quality services
- Know the needs of the community
- Help to create demand for services that promote health
- Encourage community members’ efforts to stay healthy
- Prepare for visits of mobile outreach teams
- Work with supervisor to fix any problems that arise
- Link the community with the health care system
- Keep good records and keep track of supplies in order to request more in time to avoid running out

### How do facilities support community health workers?

- Ensure continuity between community health services and facility-based services
- Provide regular supportive supervision to guide, motivate, and ensure that community health workers are functioning effectively and efficiently
- Provide mechanisms for identifying and solving problems
- Manage supply logistics for community health program
- Ensure proper waste disposal of needles and syringes

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**Research on provision of injectables by community health workers.** A recent WHO meeting reviewed available evidence and found that, with appropriate training, community health workers, including volunteers, can effectively screen clients, counsel on side effects, and give injections safely.