

WHAT IS AN ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER?

Aboriginal Health Workers provide clinical and primary health care for individuals, families and community groups. They deal with patients, clients and visitors to hospitals and health clinics and assist in arranging, coordinating and providing health care in Aboriginal Community Health Clinics.

ROLES OF AN ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER

- Treat diseases or injuries.
- Maintain health records and statistics.
- Act as a communicator and interpreter on behalf of clients and other health workers.
- Take part in case management and follow-up, independently or with other health care providers.
- Provide health education to individual clients and health staff.
- Provide cultural education to people outside the cultural community.
- Provide life skills education to the community they serve.
- Provide counselling and referral for crisis problem cases.
- Provide input to the planning, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all health programs in the community.
- Carry out administrative duties including budgeting and correspondence.

SPECIALISATIONS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers may choose to specialise in particular health areas such as eyes, ears, women or infant care. With experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers may take on management responsibilities.

ATSI HOSPITAL LIAISON OFFICER

An ATSI hospital liaison officer provides support and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families in hospitals and other health care facilities to help them feel comfortable and safe during their treatment. They help patients communicate with health care professionals, government agencies and other staff while they are in hospital.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers may work in remote communities or in metropolitan areas. They may be required to work shifts or travel long distances to visit remote communities.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Aboriginal Health Workers are employed in hospitals and other health services in metropolitan and rural areas. They work in health care teams with doctors, nurses and other health care professionals. Demand for Aboriginal Health Workers depends on the level of government funding and the use of health services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

To become an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker you usually have to complete a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Care. You can also work in this area as a hospital liaison officer without formal qualifications. You will probably get some informal training on the job.

SUPERVISION PROVIDED

A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

PERSONAL SKILLS REQUIRED OF AN ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER

- Good communication and negotiation skills
- Organisational ability
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- An understanding of health promotion principles and practice
- An understanding of team work
- An understanding of the socio economic determinants of health regarding Aboriginal people

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