

WHAT IS A HEALTH PROMOTION OFFICER?

A Health Promotion Officer (HPO) is a health professional specialising in improving and maintaining the health of populations and reducing health inequities among population groups through the action areas articulated in the Ottawa Charter: building healthy public policy, creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, developing personal skills, and reorienting health services. A clear statement of each action area is contained within the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.¹

ROLES OF A HEALTH PROMOTION OFFICER

The Health Promotion (HP) profession has evolved alongside and in response to the international health promotion movement and the broader new public health movement eg World Health Organisation's Ottawa Charter, 1996ⁱ; the Mexico Ministerial Statement, 2000ⁱⁱ; Jakarta Declaration, 1997ⁱⁱⁱ.

HP not only embraces actions directed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of individuals, but also actions directed towards changing social, environmental, political & economic conditions to alleviate their impact on populations and individual health.

HPO's are responsible for the planning, development and implementation of health promotion projects using a variety of strategies, including health education strategies, mass media strategies, community development and community engagement processes, advocacy and lobbying strategies, social marketing strategies, health policy strategies, structural and environmental strategies. Workforce development and capacity building strategies are also important components of health promotion practice.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Many HPOs are employed by health departments or health services located in the community. HPOs work as designated project managers, project officers, project consultants, evaluation and research officers, communication officers. All these roles have the common aim of improving the health of the population and reducing health inequities among population groups.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

Entry level HPOs are required to have a tertiary degree (or equivalent) in health promotion or a relevant health or social science discipline (eg. psychology, public health, nursing, medicine, communication, nutrition, sociology, social work, occupational therapy, education). Many senior HPOs also have additional degrees including Post-Graduate or Master of Health Promotion or Master of Public Health and doctorate degrees.

SUPERVISION PROVIDED

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

PERSONAL SKILL REQUIRED OF AN ELECTRICIAN

- Good oral and written communication skills
- Organisational ability
- Able to work independently with instructions
- Good negotiation skills
- Able to work as part of a team

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- ⁱ World Health Organisation. *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*. First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa. 1986. <http://www.who.int/hpr/docs/ottawa.html>
- ⁱⁱ World Health Organisation. *Mexico Ministerial Statement for the Promotion of Health*. The Fifth Global Conference on Health Promotion. Bridging the Equity Gap. 5-9 June Mexico Cities.
- ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organisation. *Jakarta Declaration on Leading Health Promotion into the 21st Century*. Fourth International Conference on Health Promotion, Jakarta. 1997.

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