

Aboriginal Health Worker



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers (ATSIHWs) play a vital role in the primary health workforce. They provide clinical and primary health care for individuals, families and community groups including specialty areas of drug and alcohol, mental health, diabetes and eye and ear health. Their common objective is to assist the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to take a strong role in controlling and managing their own health and lifestyles.

Services

An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker (ATSIHW) is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person who is in possession of a minimum qualification (cert III) within the fields of primary health care work or clinical practice.

ATSIHWs may perform a broad range of tasks including:

- the treatment of disease or injuries and maintaining health records
- acting as communicator and interpreter on behalf of clients and other health workers
- taking part in case management and follow up, either independently or with other health care providers
- providing health education to individual clients and health staff
- providing cultural education to people outside the cultural community
- providing life skills education, counselling and referral for crisis intervention in the community they serve
- providing input into the planning, development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of all health programs in the community.

ATSIHW are a unique profession where workers are able to do a variety of jobs which is often essential in rural and remote areas. They not only perform a comprehensive primary health care role (including clinical assessment, monitoring and intervention activities; health promotion and chronic disease management services) but also provide culturally safe health care suited to local health needs.

Credentials

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care qualification is nationally recognised and encompasses different levels (including cert II III IV) and varying requirements.

Registered Training Organisations which provide the Certificate IV or higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice must have the course accredited with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia, in order for participants to be registered with the AHPRA Board. This includes the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practitioner (clinical role).

Top Tip for Engaging with Aboriginal Health Workers

Actioning the recent recommendations from “Growing Our Future – Health Workforce Australia”.

Factors include:

- recognition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker workforce as a core part of the primary health care workforce
- prioritise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker workforce within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health initiatives
- increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker workforce to meet demand.

Further information

Peak Body - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association

www.natsihwa.org.au