

Community Healthcare Workers Struggles

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Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) perform a huge role in the community. CHWs provide support and assistance in accessing and using local health services, basic preventive healthcare, home visiting services, and follow-ups with patients.

On Day 2, one of the Winter School sessions looked at the struggles faced by CHWs nationally, and the lessons from the Gauteng CHWs' victory of being made permanent employees of the Health Department in 2020.

Cde Maria Van Driel shared the struggles of Gauteng CHWs. In 2009, CHWs from Gauteng came to Khanya College to seek help regarding them not being recognised and being paid as volunteers by the DoH. At Khanya, the CHWs began activist training so that they are able to articulate their struggles. As Khanya worked with them, they began to organise their reps from clinics.

Khanya College also advised the Gauteng CHWs that they should form their own organisation and that Khanya would struggle with them, assist them in this process, and provide education through training. In 2016, the Gauteng CHWs formed the Gauteng Community Health Care Forum (the Forum).

One of the key qualities that came out was CHWs' dedication and service to working class communities. During the Gauteng CHWs struggle for permanence, they never shut down a clinic because it meant the community would suffer.

Today the CHWs in Gauteng earn between R8500-R10000 and also have benefits. But since the victory, most members have left behind the Forum and its mission of assisting other provinces' CHWs to be permanent.

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