

## **Household Registrations Difficult for Community Healthcare Workers**

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Household registrations are part of the work Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) do as it helps them identify the type of service needed by families. This part of their job takes more time than the other services CHWs offer as it's the first time meeting a family.

When the first COVID-19 case was reported in South Africa, CHW Coordinators told CHWs they had to now spend less time in each house and should be cautious not to be in close proximity with individuals. But at the same time household registrations have been very important during the pandemic because CHWs were able to screen many new people who previously were not their clients but were now forced to stay at home during lockdown.

The problem CHWs are finding now is that you cannot screen only for COVID-19 and ignore other illnesses which are still major killers in our country. For the longest time CHWs have been trusted to link people quickly to primary healthcare facilities, to detect symptoms early and then refer for diagnosis.

“Getting to a household you would think that you will just register and screen, but some people would tell you their problems and need psychological support. Now you cannot stop someone who is crying and say we'll continue this when I get back as I cannot spend this much time here,” says a CHW from Eden Park Clinic (in Eden Park, a township on the Eastrand of Johannesburg).

It is also very important that CHWs always have personal protective gear as frontline workers because they often find themselves having to spend 45 minutes in one household with people who sometimes have to be reminded to wear a mask.

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