

Capacity development of the public health workforce in the current COVID-19 era

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Abstract

Capacity development is the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain their capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. Workforce training and competency is central to the success of any public health system. The delivery of quality health care is dependent on the knowledge and skills of public health personnel. Hence, public health workforce development plays a crucial role in improving the capacity of national health systems, allowing them to address present and future challenges of population health. Capacity development goes well beyond the technical cooperation and training approaches that have been associated with ‘capacity building’ in the past. The current health sector focus is on strengthening of individuals, organizations, and the wider environment (or society) and not, as often occurred in the past, solely on individuals. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation, countries across the world are introducing capacity development measures to prevent its spread, increase surveillance capacity, improve contact tracing, increase isolation and quarantine capacity as well as augment capacity of hospitals (particularly intensive care units) and staff to effectively manage positive cases.

With efforts to prevent community transmission of COVID-19 being a top national priority, ensuring preparedness of public health workers is increasingly assuming an important role in determining the course of this pandemic. Enhancing health system capacity for design and implementation of strategies that minimize the impact posed by such crises will remain a critical determinant of progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals.

Biography:

Dr. Aditi Gera has completed her Masters in Public Health Dentistry (M.D.S) from JSS University, India. She is currently working as a Senior Public Health Consultant in

Pricewaterhouse Coopers Pvt. Ltd. (PwC), a premier professional services organization in India. She has undertaken a large number of assignments in public health and has extensive experience of working with local and national governments, international development organizations, NGOs and private sector organizations. Her core areas of expertise within public health include human resources for health, capacity development, programme management, public health planning, health policy reform and health systems strengthening.

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