

Draft guideline on establishing new Public Health Midwife (PHM) areas

Family Health Programme is implemented across multiple levels in the health system and lowest is the Public Health Midwife (PHM) area where many population level health interventions are implemented. In order to improve the quality coverage of public health services number of PHM areas need to be reviewed periodically. The aim of this guideline is to streamline the process of identifying and establishing new PHM areas with minimal disruption to routine services.

The process of demarcating new PHM areas should follow the given steps.

1. Identifying a new PHM area

1.1 PHM area revision should be done only once in five years based on the actual requirement.

MOH should decide on re- demarcating his/her PHM areas for the improvement of service quality by reducing the total population assigned for a particular PHM.

1.2 Criteria to identify a new area

Population per PHM area should be approximately 3000. It could be adjusted according to population density, geographical terrain and availability of vulnerable groups. Once the above cadre is filled, reduce the population per PHM for 1500 in rural areas and 2500 in urban areas (refer guideline by Secretary, Health FHB/DIR/GF/2012 on criteria for deciding cadres of health staff for Public Health Services in Sri Lanka).

PHM area should not be less than one GN division and its boundary should overlap with one or more Grama Niladhari (GN) boundaries at all times. This will facilitate the administrative requirements, intersectoral coordination, interaction with other field officers and in monitoring mechanisms.

In exceptional circumstances, where the GN area population is larger than the expected PHM area population, a PHM area smaller than a GN area may need to be defined. At that point, the re-demarcation should be carried out based on the census block boundaries demarcated by the Dept. of Census and Statistics. (Definition of a census block: 2001 census report state that a unit smaller than a GN area;