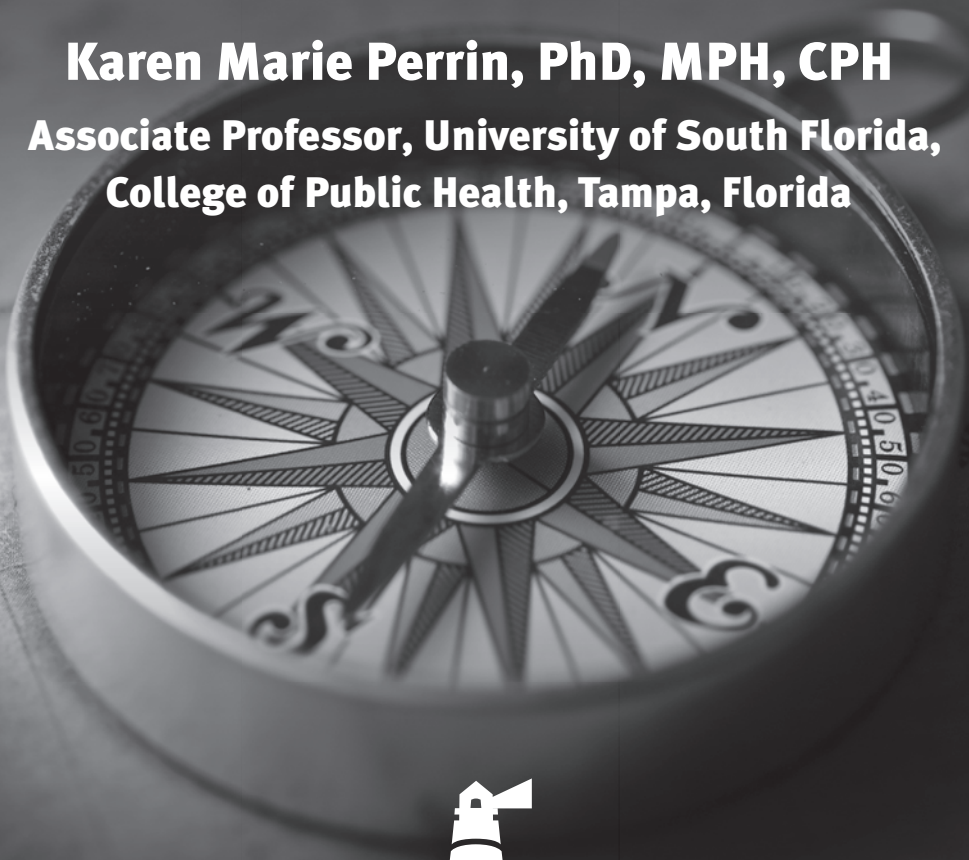


WORKING IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

Foundations for a
Successful Career

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Thanks to all Community Health Workers across the globe for your dedication to service for those individuals in need.



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Foreword

Dr. Kay Perrin brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this important new textbook, *Working in Community Health*. Dr. Perrin's career has deep roots in nursing and in public health. Her interest in community health goes back at least 3 decades and includes an early focus on patient advocacy, health literacy, and the role of spirituality in health.

Her career in nursing has spanned the life cycle from birthing to geriatrics. She brings extensive personal and professional experience about the inner workings of health care systems and the need for assistance in navigating the complexities of those systems. She is the perfect professional to speak to the growing importance and roles of Community Health Workers (CHW).

Dr. Perrin's textbook reflects the competencies required for CHW. It starts with a section on the roles of CHW, grounding the book in public health, health literacy, health equity, and the social determinants of health. Section two recognizes that CHW need a basic understanding of the biological, infectious, and environmental causes of disease.

Section three draws on her deep understanding of geriatrics and aging, focusing on the roles that CHW can play in addressing the needs of this rapidly growing segment of our population.

Section four brings the text together by providing an overview of health insurance, health facilities, and patient rights and responsibilities—all key to the day-to-day efforts of CHW.

The text concludes with a chapter on the Community Health Worker profession, providing those new to the field with important guidance on the roles, opportunities, and responsibilities of this important and emerging profession.

Working in Community Health is an ideal textbook for the education of Community Health Workers whether they receive their education and training in Community Colleges, Health Department training programs, or on the job. As with all her writing, the book is clear, to the point, and filled with an abundance of realistic examples that bring the text to life.

I have seen firsthand Dr. Perrin's commitment and competence as an educator and author. I am confident that *Working in Community Health* will play an important role in the development of the Community Health Worker profession.

Richard Riegelman MD, MPH, PhD
Professor and Founding Dean
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Preface

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are front-line public health workers that act as a link between health care providers, social service providers, and health care consumers. CHWs build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy.

Working in Community Health: Foundations for a Successful Career is written to prepare and educate community health workers for employment with the potential of a career ladder. This book provides specific knowledge required for effective employment skills, understanding basic anatomy and physiology of the most common chronic diseases, teaching how to access and understand health knowledge, as well as resume development and interview proficiency.

The book contains four sections. The first section contains Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 and includes the synopsis of public health as related to community health workers (CHWs). Chapter 1 provides an overview of the CHW profession. Chapter 2 covers the topic of adult learning and all levels of health literacy, including verbal, written, and numerical. The awareness and understanding of literacy are essential for CHWs in all aspects of their employment and practice. Chapter 3 presents and defines the concept of health equity and social determinants of health. Health equity explores the cultural disparities of access to health care. Social determinants build on the aspect of cultural diversity by exploring race, ethnicity, poverty, education, housing, job opportunities, and

neighborhoods. Chapter 4 defines and explores social justice and advocacy, including both self-advocacy and community advocacy.

The second section includes Chapters 5, 6, and 7 and introduces causes of disease. Chapter 5 explores environmental sources of various diseases, such as mold, mildew, insects, rodents, smoke, chemicals, water, and air pollutants. Chapter 6 examines the human body systems and the interactions between systems. In addition, the types of chronic diseases are defined and explained, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis. Chapter 7 investigates infectious diseases with a discussion about routes, vectors, common contagious diseases, and vaccines.

The third section consists of Chapters 8, 9, and 10 and focuses on the aspects of aging. Chapter 8 begins this section by discussing client safety, including body mechanics, fall risks, balance, and types of abuse. Chapter 9 explores the effects of aging on the body systems as well as diet, exercise, vision, hearing, and dental issues. Chapter 10 explores quality of life, advance directives, and end-of-life planning from the perspective of the elderly client as well as their family and friends.

The fourth section focuses on the CHW profession. Chapter 11 discusses types of health insurance, and Chapter 12 covers healthcare facilities as well as employment opportunities at various facilities. Chapter 13 discusses ethics, rights, and responsibilities related to CHWs. Finally, Chapter 14 provides information about various CHW curriculum and certification as well as resume writing and interviewing skills.



About the Author

Kay Perrin, PhD, MPH, RN, CPH

After working as a nurse for 17 years in hospitals and clinics, Dr. Perrin obtained her MPH and PhD. During her 25 years as faculty at the University of South Florida College of Public Health, she focused her research on maternal and child health and home visiting, initiated the successful Bachelor of Science in Public Health, and served as a Fulbright Scholar in Pune, India. Later, she served as the

Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs for the college. Over the years, Dr. Perrin has taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses.

She has published several textbooks with Jones & Bartlett Learning on the topics of evaluation, research, and health navigation. Currently, her research is in palliative support, hospice, elder care, and end-of-life decisions as a focus while volunteering at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and Tidewell Hospice in Sarasota, Florida.



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