

Better Services - Better health: Travellers Empowering and Engaging their Community through Peer Led Primary Health Care

Community Health Workers

Bridie Ward & Kathleen Ward - Tuam

Kathleen Sweeney & Angela McDonagh - Galway

Mary Collins - Mayo

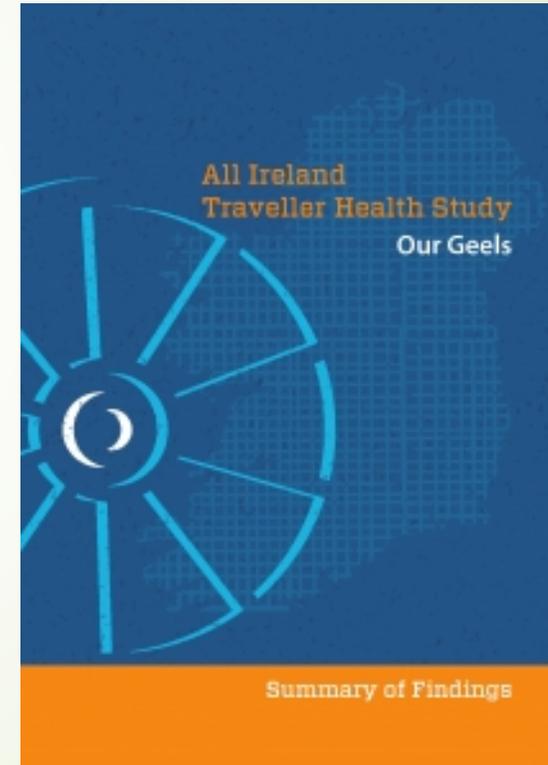


Galway Traveller Movement



National Statistics

- *'Our Geels'* All Ireland Traveller Health Study
- Peer Led Research completed in 2010
- Participation Rate 80%
- Traveller Population in Ireland: 40,129 (ROI + NI)





Mortality

- Traveller men have 4 times the mortality rate of the general population
- Traveller women have 3 times the mortality rate of the general population
- Suicide is 6 times the rate of the general population (approx. 11% of all Traveller deaths)



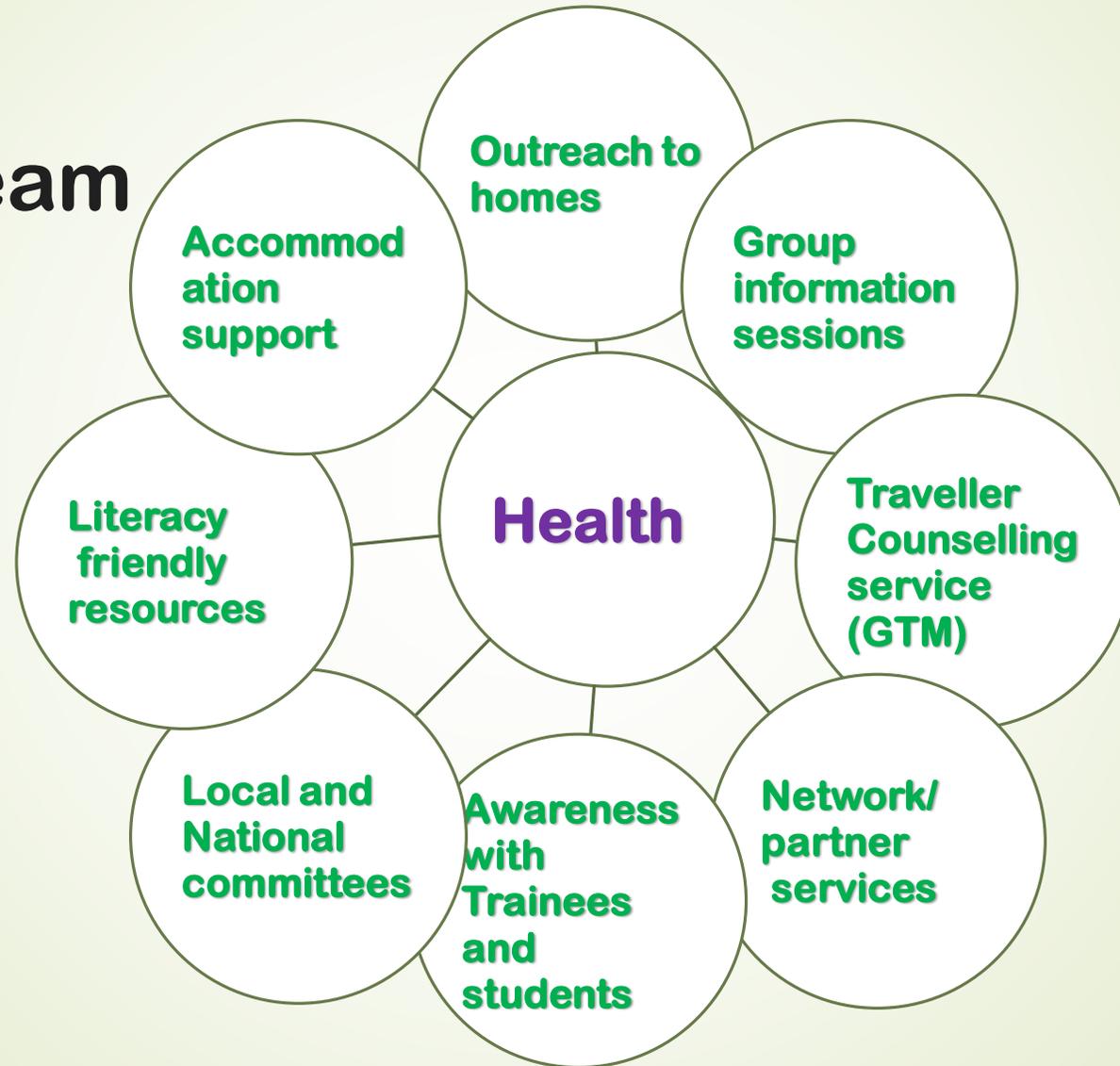
Primary Health Care

AITHS acknowledged social determinants as main cause of poor health status of Travellers.

These include accommodation, education, employment, poverty, discrimination, lifestyle, access/utilisation of services



Primary Healthcare Team



Primary Health Care: Galway City and County



- 9 Community Health Workers Galway City
- Areas covered include Ballybane, Ballinfoyle, Westside, Carrowbrowne, Salthill and Knocknacarra
- Over 400 Traveller families in target area
- 7 Community Health Workers South East Galway
- Areas Covered Include Loughrea, Ballinasloe, Athenry, Gort, Portumna, Killimor, Ballygar, Ahascragh
- Over 300 families in target area

Ethnicity

Since the 1st of March 2017 the state recognised that Travellers are a distinct ethnic minority with their own culture and beliefs and most importantly that they have a right to have their culture recognised in the planning and provision of services.



**IRISH
TRAVELLER
ETHNICITY
CELEBRATION**



There are

- **Traveller 39 women and men employed as skilled Community Health Workers in the Region**
- **We act as a link between the Traveller Community and health and community services**
- **We are work with their own families and extended families, and the community at large passing on health information, linking in with the services, advocating for rights.**
- **We also work in partnership with health services to ensure they are culturally appropriate for Travellers, specifically with midwifery, Mental Health, Community Welfare and GP services, taking an integrated approach to improving the uptake of services.**

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- **We developed culturally appropriate Health Promotion Information being, women's health leaflets, Immunisation leaflet and stress and depression video.**
 - **We Network with other Traveller Health Projects**
 - **We sit on Representational roles at various levels in health and community services.**
 - **We deliver Lecture/TFS training to student Nurses, PHN, Midwifery, Psychology Brothers of charity and other students on Traveller Culture and issues.**
 - **We link in with the services, advocating for Travellers and passing on health information. Working with the services to change the experience of Travellers in accessing services.**

Mayo Travellers Support Group



MAYO TRAVELLERS
SUPPORT GROUP

- There are 11 Community Health Workers employed by MTSG covering the whole county
- There are 2 Primary Health Care Projects in MTSG – Ballina & Castlebar
- We visit up to 350 Traveller families county wide from areas such as Ballina, Castlebar, Knock, Ballyhaunis, Claremorris, Balla and more
- Our main office is in Castlebar





Outreach

- Outreach is a huge part of our work –we visit as many families as we can in the county however this is a challenge as we only work 8 hours a week and the county is so big and the families are spread out
- developing and delivering information to Travellers in relation to health issues and the health services and going door to door
- making sure information is made available to Travellers in culturally appropriate and literacy friendly ways
- signposting services and organisations involved in health for the Traveller community

Examples of how we work

- **MTSG established a working link with the Maternity services in MUH in 2006 and since then has been working together to improve Traveller women's health and help make the hospital more Traveller friendly**
- **An annual open day or Meet the Midwife event is held in the hospital with Traveller women and maternity staff**
- **This group was the first of its kind outside of Dublin and has been used as a model of good practice**

Some key achievements to date

- a more culturally appropriate maternity service
- A relationship developed between the CHWs, Traveller women in the community and maternity staff and working towards the rest of the hospital services





Some more key achievements...

- ▶ There are 3 CHW's trained as a Common Sense Parenting (Tusla) facilitators and I am currently delivering training in the community to Traveller only groups and settled community groups in the county
- ▶ We were invited to speak at a Dublin Castle Tusla Conference last week to present our work as a pilot group within Ireland (only in Mayo so far)
- ▶ This role has given us the chance of leadership within the society

Western Traveller and Intercultural Development Tuam Peer-Led Primary Healthcare Programme



WTID Tuam Primary Healthcare Team



Back row (L to R): Bridget Ward (CHW), Madeline and Melissa (Nursing Students), Mag Ward (CHW), Caroline Canny (PHC Coordinator), Kathleen Ward (CHW) and Mary Ward (CHW)
Front row (L to R): Bridie Ward (CHW), Sally Sweeney (CHW) and Nora Ward (CHW) **Missing from photo:** David Collins (Community Development Worker)



Mary Ward (CHW) outside Bru Bhríde where the PHC Programme is based in Tuam



Community Health Worker Training Phase

- ▶ Pre-development work- Learning to learn
- ▶ Capacity building- Knowledge and skills development needed to do the job competently
- ▶ Linking the workers to tangible community based resources e.g. local health service providers, schools, local authority, Cope Outreach Service, MABS etc.
- ▶ Mapping exercise and local census to identify where Travellers resided in Tuam and its hinterlands
- ▶ Completed FETAC Level 3 Modules on: Primary Healthcare, Family Health, Food and Nutrition, Maths, Drama, Personal Effectiveness, Active Citizenship and Community Development
- ▶ Supported and funded by the THU HSE West, FAS and the VEC



Participation and Empowerment for Travellers in their health status

- ▶ Peer researchers for the All Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010
- ▶ Advocates for Traveller health on various committees/forums e.g. Traveller Midwifery and Gynae Working Group UHG, Shared Rearing Tusla, North Galway Child and Family Support Network, Galway City and County Childcare Committee etc.
- ▶ Outreach: community alerts regarding topical health issues, KPI's (Cardiovascular Health, Diabetes and Mental Health)
- ▶ Support the community to complete Medical Card, Passport, Housing, Carers Allowance applications



PHC staff, Tuam Adult and District Mental Health Association Community Employment Scheme participants with their tutor, Sean Sweeney, after completing their Occupational First Aid QQI 5 course



CHW's meeting with Rosa Meehan (Assistant Keeper) National Museum of Ireland Turlough House working towards the Traveller History Exhibition 2018



Bridget Ward (CHW) facilitating a 6 week project building a model wagon for the Traveller History Exhibition 2018 with YouthReach Tuam students



Supporting girls/young women

Collaboration with Youthreach Tuam- PHC facilitate female health awareness sessions to students on an annual basis:

- ▶ Female reproductive system and the fertile window
- ▶ Consent
- ▶ Folic Acid
- ▶ No smoking/alcohol during pregnancy
- ▶ Stages of foetal development
- ▶ Importance of keeping hospital appointments



Supporting girls/young women

Life Skills Group:

- ▶ The group applied for Passports
- ▶ Opened Bank Accounts
- ▶ Workshops on the Driver Theory Test
- ▶ Cooking Skills and household shopping and management
- ▶ MABS information session
- ▶ HAP information session
- ▶ Croi- Height, Weight, BMI and health talk
- ▶ GYM sessions, Yoga Classes, Outing to Petersburg Outdoor Education Centre

Won a Tusla Investing in Children Award 26th April 2018

Life Skills Group



Back to basics cooking/preparation, food storage and household management with the Life Skills Group

Life Skills Group



Overcoming fears and challenges at Petersburgh Outdoor Education Centre
Clonbur, Co. Galway

Life Skills Group



Two members of the group meeting John Connors discussing creative expression through art and film



Life Skills group achieving an Investing in Children Certificate 26th April 2018

Thank you for listening!



Patches embroidered by CHWs