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## The Silent Heroes of Bocaue: A Phenomenology of Barangay Health Workers in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

As cliché as it may sound, health is indeed wealth. Now that everyone faces this global pandemic, well-being matters most to people. Since 1991, the Department of Health handed over primary health services to the LGUs. The barangay health centers handle primary health care. Each center has trained volunteers called Barangay Health Workers or BHWs. The study aimed to delve into the lived experiences of BHWs during the pandemic, specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: What is the reason why they chose to be BHWs? What adjustments did they make when the pandemic came? What drives them to continue working? How can they handle their personal life and duties as BHWs? How do they manage their work amid the pandemic? The study is done with a qualitative-phenomenological approach. To gather the needed data, the researchers employed purposive sampling to find participants interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The interviews were transcribed into words and significant statements were extracted. Then, these significant meanings are clustered to create emergent themes. The themes that emerged from the interviews were: Justification for Becoming BHWs, From the Height of the Pandemic Into The New Normal, Work-Life Balance: Family or Work?, and Challenges Brought by the Work and Line of Duty. The statements are then categorized into themes after an analysis. After the analyses, the researchers came up with the following conclusions: 1) There are various reasons why the informants chose to be BHWs, including the benefits, work flexibility, knowledge and experiences, and service to the community. 2) During the pandemic, most informants adjusted in almost all aspects of their work such as the protocols and work hours. 3) Most BHWs lost time with their families. 4) The BHWs experienced numerous challenges in all aspects of their work such as financial, mental, and physical.

### INTRODUCTION

As cliché as it may sound, health is indeed wealth. Now that everyone faces this global pandemic, well-being matters most to people. Since the 1991 Local Government Code enactment, the Department of Health handed over the primary health services managed by them to the local government units. The barangay health centers and clinics handle primary health care. Each center has trained volunteers called Barangay Health Workers or simply, BHWs.

A barangay health worker is someone who has undergone training programs under any accredited government and non-government organization. They voluntarily render primary health care services in the community after being accredited to function as such by the local health board by the guidelines promulgated by the Department of Health (Poe, 2014). According to the Department of Health (2015), the basic tasks of BHW's duty are to (1) monitor the height and weight of the children; (2) offer first aid for emergency cases; (3) immunizations of children; (4) provide health-related information and education; (5) report any disease outbreaks or health problems in their community, and; (6) respond to natural calamities and disasters.

Undoubtedly, BHWs are necessary for a community's health care. However, the wellness of barangay

healthcare workers is essential too. With such scarcity in their number, they cannot afford to be sick or absent, especially in epidemics where immediate treatment is needed. To provide effective, efficient, and appropriate health care services to the public, competent, motivated, and resourceful health workers are required.

However, struggles are faced by BHWs, especially when facing the "invisible enemy," such as exposure to diseases, low salaries, side jobs to make ends meet, anger from community members, and vulnerability. BHWs faced this every day until a much bigger enemy came, the global pandemic - a disease outbreak that spread across the globe. The World Health Organization first brought the COVID-19 epidemic to the public's awareness on the 31st of December, 2019. It was first reported as a "mysterious disease" by the Chinese media. The World Health Organization (2020), reported that the first detection of the virus was in a hospital in the City of Wuhan, People's Republic of China. SARS CoV2 causes COVID-19 or Coronavirus disease 2019 (WebMD, 2020), which brings viral infection to the respiratory system. The condition can be transmitted through droplets. After two months and over a hundred thousand cases, it is raised to a pandemic status (Ducharme, 2020).

As of writing, the Department of Health of the Republic of the Philippines has recorded more than 3.5 million

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confirmed cases of the said virus (2022). More than 50,000 people died battling the disease. On the bright side, more than 90 percent of the confirmed cases have recovered from the virus.

At the pandemic's peak, the country's healthcare system almost collapsed. The surge led to COVID-19-positive individuals staying at makeshift quarantine facilities such as school classrooms, tents, and even container vans (Esguerra, 2020). Furthermore, there are no available registered nurses or health professionals to cater to the infected individual's needs; this is when the Barangay Health Workers came in. From taking swabs or test samples to delivering necessities, the BHWs took over the duties of healthcare professionals.

Long before the pandemic, the government proposed the "Barangay Health Workers and Services Reform Act of 2014" for the supposed betterment of the situations of the BHWs. It states the following: (1) Each barangay health center must have a proper environment with complete apparatus and furniture, lighting, ventilation, running water, and electricity; (2) Each barangay health center shall have its performing BHWs; (3) A barangay health center shall have a nurse, a midwife, and a barangay healthcare volunteer where the nurse spearheads the operation; (4) The number of employees must be based on the population of the community: a) Nurse - at least one nurse for a barangay consisting of no more than five thousand (5,000) in population; b) Midwife - at least one midwife for a barangay consisting of no more than two thousand five hundred (2,500) in population; c) BHW - at least one BHW for a barangay consisting of no more than five hundred (500) in population; (5) The salary of a BHW is set at Salary Grade 1, which is about Php 12 000, and; (6) BHWs shall receive incentives and benefits as ruled by Republic Act No. 7883 of 1995 (hazard and subsistence allowances).

However, no progress has been made after the bill's proposal, as it has not been enacted into law. If the bill is passed into law, the benefits proposed could help BHWs with their daily expenses and the cost of their living. As stated by a BHW in an interview with Lasco (2018), "It is not enough to support my three grandchildren; I only receive a P1,500 honorarium per month. Even if I'm a senior citizen, I still work to make a living." If, in 2018, the BHWs experienced this kind of underappreciation, imagine how hard it was for them during the height of the pandemic. In another interview, Dr. Terence Kua (2018) emphasized that BHWs are the front liners, and primary care will fall apart without them. However, seeing these accounts of the BHWs, it is hard to say that the government has done enough to compensate them rightly. All of these efforts to improve the situation of BHW started as early as the year 1995. The "Barangay Health Workers' Benefits and Incentives Act of 1995" was enacted in the cause of recognizing the BHW's effort to perform their duties regularly and accordingly. Nevertheless, this law needs proper execution and implementation after 27 years. With the government being mindful that BHWs are volunteers, it is unmindful that they are not given

the treatment they deserve, such as regular allowance based on salary grades, proper environment, reasonable working hours, and protection from any form of hazards. Moreover, the public is unaware of these struggles, making some people look down on them. BHWs are always working from behind, and their voices must be heard.

### Research Questions

The primary pursuit of this research is to delve into the situation and lived experiences of the silent heroes of Bocaue during the pandemic, the Barangay Health Workers. Furthermore, the study sought to answer the following specific questions:

1. What are their reasons for being barangay health workers?
2. What were their adjustments when the pandemic happened?
3. What drives them to continue working despite the risks of the job?
4. How were they able to handle their personal lives and their duties as BHWs?

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

The research type that the researchers utilized is the qualitative type of research. Qualitative research can be referred to as research that is mainly focused on answering questions like "what" and "why." Crossman (2020) stated that qualitative research is a type of study that interprets the meanings of non-numerical data gathered to better understand social life in specific populations or places. Unlike quantitative research, which focuses more on numerical data and statistics, qualitative research focuses more on qualitative data from interviews.

As the study focuses on the experiences of Barangay Health Workers, the researchers selected the phenomenological research approach because they considered that this is the most acceptable approach to use for the subject. As stated by Nair (2021), phenomenology is a practical method in qualitative research. It allows researchers to put aside their perceptions of a phenomenon and give meaning to participants' experiences. The phenomenological approach focuses on exploring the experiences that have influenced an individual. The researchers opted to use this method because phenomenological research is a method to comprehend individual conditions in detail. Furthermore, this approach is widely used to study lived experiences, understand how human beings think, and expand a researcher's knowledge about a particular phenomenon.

In this research design, interviews are the most suitable method for gathering data because the main focus of the study is to collect information that cannot be expressed as numerical data. Specifically, a semi-structured questionnaire is employed in conducting the data-gathering procedures.

#### Research Locale

The researchers conducted the study in Bocaue, a first-class municipality in Bulacan province in the Philippines.

Bocawe is politically subdivided into nineteen local villages or barangays. There are four hospitals inside the municipality. The only public hospital is the newly-inaugurated Joaquin Villanueva Medical Center, while the three remaining were all privately owned hospitals. The researchers chose the said municipality as the locale of the study because they believe that the absence of a publicly-owned hospital significantly affected the informants' work amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the ownership of these hospitals is recapitulated in the table below:

- Joaquin Villanueva Medical Center (Publicly-owned)
- Dr. Yanga's Hospital, Inc. (Privately-owned)
- St. Paul Hospital Bulacan, Inc. (Privately-owned)
- Mt. Carmel Hospital, Inc. (Privately-owned)

### Informants

The informants of this research were chosen through purposive sampling. According to ThoughtCo (2020), purposive sampling, also known as subjective sampling, is non-probability sampling. The researchers depended on their assessment in selecting participants who would participate in their study. The researchers picked the informants of this research based on the following criteria set:

1. In the range of ages: 20 – 65 years old.
2. A Barangay Health Worker for at least three years.
3. Served as a BHW during the COVID-19 pandemic and assigned with at least one of the tasks below:
  - a) Directly handled COVID-19 positive patients
  - b) COVID-19 immunizations
  - c) Contact tracing operations

### Instrument

The researchers used a semi-structured type of interview. According to Doyle (2020), in this type of interview, the interviewer can ask follow-up questions to the informant for a better understanding of the statement the informant has given. The informants agreed to use a voice recording application to record the whole interview. The interview is done conversationally so the informants to express their thoughts much more comfortably.

### Data Analysis

The researchers used Colaizzi's method of data analysis to understand, describe, and depict the experiences of Barangay Health Workers in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main objective of employing this method was to generate a detailed description of the phenomena addressing the challenges of barangay health workers amid the pandemic response of the government (Morrow, 2015).

According to Colaizzi (1978), there are several steps to utilize this method. First, informants' transcripts of the experiences are read several times to develop a sense of familiarization. Secondly, significant statements are extracted to help in understanding the phenomenon. Third, meanings are formulated from significant accounts. Then, the extracted meanings are organized into theme

clusters. Fifth, the emergent themes are integrated into a short but detailed description of the phenomenon involving the informants, the BHWs. After integrating the emergent themes, the fundamental structure of the phenomenon is formulated. Lastly, the researchers validated the study's findings through the informants (Gumarang, 2021).

### Ethical Considerations

Research usually includes learning real-life phenomena, investigating cases, examining behaviors, and enhancing lives differently. In conducting research, it involves vital ethical considerations. Ethical considerations in studies are a set of principles that drive the research. The researchers must consistently adhere to a particular code of conduct when gathering data from individuals. Moreover, the research's participants are protected by the Republic Act 10173 more popularly known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, as the researchers conduct the data-gathering procedure in their presence.

### Voluntary Participation

The informants were free to opt in or out of the interview at any given time, and the researchers respected their decisions.

### Informed Consent

The informants were well informed of the research's aim, benefits, and risks before they agreed to join the study.

### Establishing Rigor

The researchers established trust with the informants by ensuring them that their responses would not be used other than for research purposes.

### Anonymity and Confidentiality

Any sensitive information collected from the research's participants, was kept confidential.

### Honesty and Integrity

The sources of the information the study possesses are properly cited and given credit; no form of infringement of intellectual property is committed.

### Validity and Reliability

The results obtained by the study were ensured to be accurate and not exaggerated; moreover, the researchers guarantee that the results are not misleading in any form.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Justification for Becoming BHWs

In this emergent theme, the informants shared their reasons for becoming BHWs. Some informants want to serve and help their community by assisting people who cannot afford hospital visits. They understand that their work can create change as a result of this. Another reason is that they anticipate benefits and allowances to meet their wants and needs. The informants also claimed

**Table 1:** Justification for Becoming BHWs

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
An Act of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They want to give back to the community by serving as the front line of the primary healthcare system.</li> <li>• In performing their duties, they have learned that their job creates impact.</li> </ul>
Expected Salaries and Honoraria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They expected a sufficient and fair compensation from serving as BHWs.</li> </ul>
Through a Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A family member of a close friend suggested the job.</li> <li>• The BHW got their job through a recommendation of someone in the barangay health center.</li> </ul>
Knowledge and Experiences acquired from the Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are learned the basic skills in responding to certain cases.</li> <li>• They are getting experiences from their job which they can apply in their daily lives.</li> </ul>
Work Schedule Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They chose to become BHWs because of the flexibility of work schedule.</li> </ul>

that they became BHWs because a relative, a friend, or an acquaintance thought they would fit as health workers. The informants are aware that they would get crucial basic medical knowledge that they can apply daily by entering this line of duty. Lastly, since the majority of the informants have children to look after, they chose to work as BHWs because of the work flexibility. Their schedule is only once or twice a week, so they do not have to go to work every day.

The informants discussed their justifications for becoming BHWs. The first cluster under this emergent theme is their desire to help the community. They stated that they want to give back to the community by serving. To testify:

“Pinili kong maging isang BHW para ako ay makapaglingkod sa taumbayan at sa aming komunidad, barangay...mga kababayan natin.” [I chose to be a BHW so that I can serve the people and our community, the barangay, our fellow citizens...] (BHW3, Lines 285-286)  
 “...Naisip ko kasi na sa pagiging BHW, parang Malaki epekto nun sa ibang tao, kumbaga, may impact yung trabaho ko.” [...I thought that being a BHW, it seems like it has a big effect on other people, it seems, my work has an impact]. (BHW8, Line 647-648)

They chose to become BHWs as an act of service and commitment to their community, as evidenced by the informant’s narration. According to Van Tongeren (2011), engaging in altruistic actions may allow us to find satisfaction because it improves our relationships with other people. They also mentioned that their work has an impact on others, their community, and themselves. To prove this, one informant stated:

“...Nabigyan ko rin naman ng pagpapa-halaga ang aking trabaho bilang isang BHW sapagkat nagkaroon po ako ng maraming kaibigan at kakilala. Natuto rin ako magserbisyo sa aking barangay na isang tagapangalaga lalo na sa mga may sakit.” [...I also valued my work as a BHW because I made many friends and acquaintances. I also learned to serve my barangay as a caregiver especially for the sick]. (BHW2, Lines 264-26)

“Inspirayon ko na lang yung mga kabaryo ko. Nakatanim na sa puso ko na nais kong trabaho ay ‘yung makakagawa

ng impact ba sa mga tao.” [I am just inspired by my co-villagers. It has been planted in my heart that I want a job that will make an impact on people]. (BHW6, Lines 482-483)

Though they have to serve, the informants also became BHWs because of the expected good and fair benefits. To prove this, here are some significant statements identified: “...Yung panahon kasing yun, medyo mahirap kami, eh may allowance naman kung papasok ka na BHW...” [That time, we were financially struggling, there was an allowance for becoming BHW]. (BHW8, Lines 650-651)  
 As said in the statements above, the informants plan to depend on their allowances and benefits for their families. When families can meet essential needs such as food, housing, and medical care, the situation allows parents to give critical support that children need to mature into productive adults (Masten, *et al.*, 2021). In connection, some of the informants might not be BHWs today if not for the suggestions of their relatives or friends. Here are some statements:

“Siguro yung unang dahilan ay yung may nagsuggest sa akin na kaibigan ko na BHW din, subukan ko raw...” [Perhaps the first reason was that my friend, who happened to be a BHW, suggested that I should also try to become one...] (BHW7, Lines 545-546)

Moreover, the informants know that their job benefits them in the way that they get to learn skills and different medical concepts.

“...Katulad ng mga anak ko yung mga impormasyon sa bakuna, nai-inform kaagad kami, kumbaga ‘pag may sakit, alam ko ‘yung mga gagawin, saka nagkaroon kami ng kaalaman.” [Me and my children were informed ahead of time regarding the vaccine, I know what to do when someone is sick. We are informed...] (BHW1, Lines 19-21)  
 From the statements above, the informants can use this knowledge acquired from their jobs to help themselves and their family members in case of emergency. A person needs health literacy skills to find and access care, prevent certain health conditions from worsening, effectively address emergencies, and eventually communicate what is happening.

Lastly, one of the reasons for becoming a BHW is

because of work schedule flexibility. To amplify, here are some statements:

“...Noong time na iyon, solo parent ako. May dalawa akong anak, kumbaga, iniisip ko yung oras na ito ay hindi naman lagi-laging papasok, kung kailan ka lang naka-schedule, doon ka lang papasok, saka iniisip ko rin kasi na hindi ako pwedeng mag trabaho ng full time” [At that time, I was a single parent and I have two children. With the job, I do not need to go to work all the time, only during my scheduled duty. I thought of that because I cannot work full-time]. (BHW1, Lines 12-15)

According to Doyle (2019), employees value flexible schedules to balance work and non-work responsibilities.

Flexible schedules are helpful for workers who are raising families, attending graduate school, commuting long distances, traveling, or balancing multiple jobs.

**From the Height of the Pandemic into the New Normal**

This emergent theme revolved around the things that the BHWs have done before the pandemic surged. They have also discussed what they have done in their response during the pandemic surge. Furthermore, they also talked about adjusting to the new norms of performing their duties and responsibilities as the world slowly transitions to the new normal.

**Table 2:** From the Height of the Pandemic into the New Normal

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
Adjustments to the Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs made certain adjustments when the pandemic came.</li> <li>• The BHWs have adapted to the nature of the pandemic and the necessary public health protocols.</li> <li>• The BHWs had to work longer hours than usual.</li> </ul>
Pandemic Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs partook in the pandemic response of the government.</li> <li>• They have taken care of COVID19 positive patients.</li> <li>• They participated in implementing public health protocols and standards.</li> </ul>
The New Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs partook in the COVID-19 vaccination drive by the government.</li> <li>• They played a role in encouraging the public to get vaccinated.</li> <li>• They are slowly adjusting to the new normal way of performing their work.</li> </ul>

In this theme cluster, the BHWs discussed the adjustments they had made when the pandemic struck. Here are some statements gathered:

“...Yung pinakamalaking adjustment na ginawa ko ay yung pag-iingat na hindi ako mahawa ng virus kasi may apo na rin ako, baby pa ‘yun, kaya tripling ingat talaga.” [...The biggest adjustment I made was really taking care of myself so that I would not catch any virus for the reason that I also take care of my grandchild who is still a baby, so I took care of myself three times more]. (BHW8, Lines 658-659)

“Ginawa na lang naming ay ipagpatuloy ang aming trabaho habang patuloy na sumusunod sa mga health protocols. Magsuot lang lagi ng mask, social distancing, maghuhugas at mag-alcohol tuwing may hahawakang mga bagay-bagay.” [We carried on with our duties while adhering to the health protocols. We always wear mask, maintain social distancing, wash our hands, and use alcohol after getting in contact with things]. (BHW5, Lines 406-409)

Besides maintaining the health protocols while working, the BHWs also had to spend long hours working and going home later than they usually do pre-pandemic. Work consumes most of their time, and they barely get to stay at home. To testify:

“Mas humaba yung oras ng pasok naming, kasi dati 8 hours lang, noon na nagka-virus, maagang papasok, late na late nang uwi...” [Our work shift got extended, back then it was only 8 hours, when the pandemic happened, we come to work so early and then come home very late].

(BHW8, Lines 661-662)

“Humaba ang oras ng trabaho, minsan wala na kaming breaks o mga pahinga man lang para makakain.” [Our working hours were extended, there are times that we do not get to have break time to eat or rest]. (BHW6, Lines 464-465)

As stated above, the informants have to endure prolonged working hours since they are needed. According to Williams (2014), long working hours may cause less productivity and increase the risk of having work fatigue. Furthermore, it can also cause higher stress levels and lesser social interactions.

In connection, BHW plays a crucial role in the government’s pandemic response, so they must work for prolonged hours. They are the people’s link to healthcare facilities and services. BHWs are the first point contact of the COVID-19-positive patients. Their work includes interviewing patients, assessing them, monitoring them, and directly taking care of them. To prove:

“Nung pandemic, doon parang lahat kami ano, naging alert and active kasi noong una lahat ng darating mula ibang bansa, imo-monitor namin, tatawagin every day, icheck naming kung nagkaroon ba ng symptoms, o kung sila ba ay nagka-COVID?” [During the pandemic, all of us were alert and active. We kept track of those who came overseas, we call them every day to check if they had symptoms or if they had contacted COVID-19]. (BHW1, Lines 25-28)

“Kung ano yung bibilhin nilang gamut, kami lahat. Magbibigay lang ng reseta tsaka pera, isasanitize nila.

Kami pa rin ang maghahatid sa kanila, pagkain nila, lahat, kung ano kailangan nila...” [Whatever medicine they, it’s on us, we had to buy everything they need. They just give us the prescriptions and money, they sanitize it, and then we’ll be the ones to get what they need – food and everything that they need]. (BHW6, Lines 517-519)

The statements above show that the BHWs do everything for the safety of the people in their community. According to Querri, *et al.* (2018), this shows the dedication and courage to serve the people. The BHWs personally visit houses to conduct health care services for the patients. They also participated in implementing public health protocols and standards in their barangays. Here are some statements for confirmation:

“Nagpapaalala kami na lagi sumunod sa mga health protocols dahil mahirap na kung sila pala ay positive at sila ay magkakalat pa. Kumbaga ay tumulong kami na mag-implement ng mga health protocols na inilabas ng gobyerno natin.” [We remind the people to adhere the health protocols because it will be more difficult if they are positive and might spread the virus. In some ways, we aid in the implementation of health protocols coming from our government]. (BHW7, Lines 561-563)

Aside from adhering to public health protocols, the government also suggests taking vaccines now available to aid in the fight against the virus. The BHWs are a massive help in the program because they assess people and persuade others to get vaccinated. To quote:

“Maglalakad kami, yung mga di pa nabakunahan, nagbabahay-bahay kami ng mga gusting mavaccine.” [We are going on a house-to-house run, to check on those who are not yet vaccinated]. (BHW6, Lines 476-477)

The BHWs discussed the government’s approach to persuading the people. As stated by Berkowitz (2016), personal interactions can help build trust between people. In relation, the BHWs successfully persuaded the people by going door-to-door. As the public advances to the new

normal through vaccinations, the informants gradually adjust to the new normal way of doing their tasks. To justify:

“Naapektuhan ng pandemya ang aming trabaho lalonglalo na sa mga nangyayari sa atin noong nagkapandemya, marami kaming naging obligasyon sa mga tao, lalo na sa may mga sakit, kami ang nagmomonitor sa kanila, nag-aassess. Kung ano man ang kanilang pangangailangan, kami ang nagbibigay ng suporta sa kanila.” [The pandemic really affected our work, especially with what happened when the pandemic occurred. As our work and obligations include monitoring and assessing the patients, we help them with what they need as we give our support to these people]. (BHW2, Lines 235-237)

“Ngayon naming humupa na ang kasi at hindi pa mataas, at huwag naman sanang tumaas pa, medyo okay na, sa vaccination kami naka-focus ngayon. Kumbaga ay nasa adjustment na ako papuntang new normal.” [Now that the cases have subsided, hopefully it will not go high again, we are focused on vaccination. We definitely are in the adjustment to new normal]. (BHW7, Lines 567-569)

New normal adjustments are made slowly to push a smooth transition, unlike the sudden change brought by the pandemic that caused many people to feel stressed. Adjustment varies from person to person, but the informants need to adjust immediately to deliver the public’s health services.

**Work-Life Balance: Family or Work?**

Under this emergent theme, the informants were asked about their priorities as a BHW in terms of work-life balance. Some informants choose work as their priority over family due to financial incapability and heavy work demands. Some choose family as their priority over work because they value their relationship with their loved ones more. Lastly, some choose to balance their priorities as much as possible to avoid any conflict.

**Table 3:** Work-Life Balance: Family or Work?

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
Work Over Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs prioritize their duties over family bonds.</li> <li>• They prioritize their work due to heavy demands of the job workload.</li> <li>• They prioritize their work because of financial incapability.</li> </ul>
Family Over Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs make sure that even though they are working, they still have time for their family.</li> <li>• The BHWs prioritize family connections to lessen the stress they have been receiving from work.</li> </ul>
Balanced Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs try to balance work and family bonds as much as possible.</li> <li>• The BHWs balance their time for work and life to avoid mental and emotional health problems such as burnout and anxiety.</li> </ul>

The informants discussed their priority as a BHW in the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this theme, the first theme cluster showed that they chose work as their priority.

“...nabawasan ang oras ko sa kanilang pamilya ko, tanggap at nauunawaan naman nila kasi ito ang gusto kong gawin at ito ang sinumpaan kong tungkulin...” [I have reduced my time with my family, they accepted it and understood because this is what I want to do as this is my sworn

duty...] (BHW5, Lines 423-425)

As the informants said in the statements, they prioritized work over being with their family, especially with the heavy demands of their workload. To testify:

“Noong mataas talaga ang cases, halos wala na akong time para sa mga anak ko, sa asawa ko.” [When the cases were really high, I had almost no time for my children and my husband]. (BHW7, Lines 581-582)

“Yung oras ko napunta lahat sa trabaho kasi ang hectic ng mga gawain namin...” [I spent all my time at work because our activities are hectic]. (BHW8, Line 674)

The informants stated how hard it is to be a BHW at the time of the pandemic, especially at times when their financial needs were urgent. To confirm, here are some statements from the transcript:

“...parang hindi na daw ako nagpapahinga, sabi ko naman ay ‘Okay naman ako.’ Kailangang magtrabaho eh para mabuhay tayo, makakain at makaaral kayo.” [They said that I do not seem to be resting anymore, I told them I am okay and I had to work so they can live, eat, and continue their studies]. (BHW7, Lines 582-583)

The statements above showed how hard it is to be a BHW. According to Bishop (2020), thoughtful prioritization allocates time and work to bring the most value in a short period.

Some informants said that family is their priority than work. The second cluster revolves around choosing family as their priority rather than work. To justify:

“...Mas inuna ko yung pamilya ko, pero alam naman natin, hindi talaga maiiwasan na mahahati talaga yung mga oras natin tuwing tayo ay nagtrabaho. Kailangan din kasi ng pamilya ko yung trabaho ko eh, kailangan kong kumita para sa kanila. Malaki din kasi ang nagiging tulong ng mga natatanggap ko na benepisyo mula sa trabaho eh.” [I put my family first, but we know, it’s inevitable that our time will be divided every time we work. Because my family also needs my job, I need to earn money for them. The benefits I receive from work also help a lot]. (BHW3, Lines 297-300)

The informants are genuinely dedicated to continue working for their families for sustainability. Another reason why some informants choose family as their priority is because their family lessens the problems and stress they have. To prove:

“Pero nito namang mababa na nga ang cases, priority ko na ang pamilya ko, kumbaga para mabawasan ang stress at bigat ng trabaho, para makabawi na rin ako sa mga nagging pagkukulang ko sa kanila nitong pandemya.” [But now that the cases are low, my family is my priority, supposedly to reduce stress and workload, so that I can make up for the shortcomings I had with them in this pandemic]. (BHW7, Lines 584-586)

The informants prove that prioritization is essential as a BHW, as statements from the informants expressed. According to Gilchrist (2018), people with higher salaries felt more comfortable prioritizing family. In connection, BHWs tend to prioritize their work since they are the breadwinners of their families.

Lastly, for this theme, informants tend to be able to synchronize work and family despite the pandemic. To testify:

“Kumaunti ang oras ko para sa aking pamilya, siyempre, marami rin ang mga gawain lalo na at naging busy ang lahat ng BHW lalo na noong nagkaroon ng pandemya pero sa ganoong paraan nagawa ko ang lahat ng aking tungkulin sa aking trabaho, sinubukan ko itong balansehin sa pamamagitan ng pag-una sa aking mga obligasyon sa

aking pamilya.” [I had less time for my family, of course, there is also a lot of work especially and all BHWs were busy especially when there was a pandemic surge but that way I did all my duty in my job, I tried it balance by prioritizing my obligations to my family]. (BHW2, Lines 243-248)

“...noong nagkapandemya... pareho kong priority ang aking trabaho at aking pamilya, kumbaga, balanse ba...” [When the pandemic happened, my job and my family were both my priority, I make sure that I balanced my time]. (BHW5, Lines 428-430)

The informants’ statements showed how BHWs are balancing their family and work. In addition, the informants tend to balance work and family to avoid burnout and stress factors. To justify:

“Kung tumaas man ulit ang mga cases, di ko na uulitin na sa work lang ang focus, ibabalanse ko na ang priority ko para iwas stress na din at mabawasan ang kumbaga ba ay bigat ng trabaho.” [If the cases rise again, I will not repeat my mistake that my focus is in my work, I will balance my priority to avoid stress as well and reduce the burden of work]. (BHW7, Lines 586-588)

“Pero ngayon na mababa na yung cases, I balance my time na para makabawi ako sa mga anak ko, sa asawa ko, and sa mga apo ko na rin na kakasabi ko nga lang na kakapanganak pa nga lang. Ayun, bumabawi ako para sa akin din kasi dahil sa stress na nakukuha ko sa trabaho, yun nagbabawas ako sa pakikipag bonding sa mga kapamilya ko.” [But now that the cases are low, I balance my time so that I can make up for my children, my wife, and my grandchildren who is a newborn. I’m catching up for myself too because of the stress I get at work, that’s how I reduce stress, through bonding with my family members]. (BHW8, Lines 675-678)

The informants showed that no matter what difficulties happen in being a BHW, they can balance their time for work and their loved ones. According to Raising Children AU (2021), if a person has enough time for their work and family, it lessens the stress and burnout of a person.

### Challenges Brought by Work and Line of Duty

In this theme, the informants discuss the different challenges and adversities they have faced during the pandemic. According to the informant’s statements, the allowances and benefits they receive are lacking, and it is too small compared to the cost of living nowadays. The informants also pointed out that they had already faced some of these problems even before the pandemic. There are reports of health centers lacking equipment, or the health center itself worsening due to its age. In addition, there are un hospitable communities that make it hard for the BHWs to perform their jobs. Furthermore, the BHWs experience stress and anxiety, mainly caused by the heavy workload and the unpleasant treatment they receive from the communities. Lastly, there are many problems within the healthcare system that make it hard for them to respond to the pandemic, one of these problems is the hazard and risks they face in performing their duties, especially when the pandemic comes.

**Table 4:** Challenges Brought by Work and Line of Duty

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
Delayed Low Allowance and Insufficient Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The allowance that they receive is low.</li> <li>• Lacking of benefits they receive.</li> <li>• The perks that they are expecting to receive are delayed in release.</li> </ul>
Lack of Support from the National and Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their training is not enough, thus resulting in a lack of skills.</li> <li>• Their barangay health center lacks equipment and apparatuses.</li> </ul>
Unhospitable Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community is unkind and unwelcoming.</li> <li>• The community does not cooperate with the BHWs.</li> <li>• Oftentimes, the residents</li> </ul>
Stress and Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs experiences stress caused by their relationship with the community people.</li> <li>• The BHWs experiences stress caused by the pressure and the heavy workload of their line of duty.</li> </ul>
Hazards and Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs are exposed to the risk of being infected with a virus, especially in this global pandemic.</li> <li>• Aside from the virus, the BHWs are also prone to other contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, etc.</li> </ul>

The informants discussed the challenges they faced during the pandemic. The first cluster under this theme revolves around the allowances and benefits they receive. “...sa finance, sa tingin ko... hindi siya sapat. Para sa mga ginagawa namin na trabaho, sa tingin ko kulang siya. Hindi nga siya salary eh, allowance lang siya, pero okay na rin yung may natatanggap kami, kaysa wala, ‘yun nga lang, medyo maliit talaga siya.” [In financial terms I think it is not enough. For all of the tasks we do in work, I think, it is lacking. Actually, it is not “salary,” it is just an allowance, but still, it is better than nothing, the thing is, it is really a small amount]. (BHW3, Lines 307-310)

As the informants said in the statements above, their allowances are too low and lacking. The benefits they receive alongside their monthly allowance seem not to benefit them. To further explain:

“Pero kung tututusin talaga, kulang. Lalo na yung mga benefits na natatanggap ng mga healthworkers, halos wala.” [But looking at it, it is lacking. Especially the benefits that health workers receive, it’s almost nothing]. (BHW6, Lines 480-481)

“Hirap kami ngayon kaya kahit maliit ang benepisyo at allowance na natatanggap, pumapasok pa din ako...” [We are struggling right now, so even if the benefits and allowances we receive are low, I still do my job]. (BHW7, Lines 571-572)

The informants stated that the allowances they receive are low, but one more thing, aside from these “perks” being insufficient and lacking, there is also a delay in their release. To confirm, here are some statements from the transcript:

“Siguro noong pandemic lang talaga...isang allowance lang namin lang ang nadelay...” [Perhaps because of the pandemic, we had one instance of delayed allowance]. (BHW1, Lines 132-134)

According to Eden Health Team (2022), an adequate benefits package can cause employees to feel rewarded and appreciated for their efforts. Benefits also provide the

BHWs’ family health and financial stability. But like what the informants have said, the allowances and benefits are low, and sometimes the release is delayed.

Another major challenge the informants have faced is the government’s lack of support. One aspect where the government lacked support is the lack of training for the BHWs to perform their jobs well. To support:

“...medyo nakukulangan ako sa mga training na ibinigay sa amin, kasi ang alam ko, may bumababa na mga nag-training sa mga BHW kada 6 months yata yun kaso parang minsan lang kami napupuntahan dito kaya parang nakukulangan ako sa training.” [In my opinion, I think we do not have enough training because based on what I know, there are people who train the BHWs every six months. Though I am not sure, we are only trained a few times that is why we do not have enough training]. (BHW7, Lines 589-592)

Another aspect in which the government lacks support is the condition of the Barangay Health Centers and the equipment inside them. As evidenced:

“Kulang yung suporta ng gobyerno sa amin, kasi yung mga kagamitan dito sa center, minsan ay nagkukulang...” [The government gives low support to us because the equipment here in the health center are insufficient]. (BHW7, Lines 592-593)

“...yung mga gamit dito sa center, may mga sira na, meron mga gamit na kailangan namin pero hindi naibibigay.” [The equipment here in the center are broken, the apparatuses that we need are not available]. (BHW8, Lines 685-686)

According to the statements above, the BHWs experience a lack of government support. As a result, the BHWs may not perform their job well, contrary to their expectations. When medical equipment is accessible and in good working order, the environment becomes safer for patients, and the health workers become more productive (Rupp, 2021). In relation, they have encountered unhospitable community residents in performing their duties, which makes their job more challenging in lieu of

lack of government support. To quote:

“Nakakarinig kami ng kung anu-ano tungkol sa amin, pero tinatanggap lang naming iyon kasi kung feeling nila mali kami, sige go, pero pag alam namin tama kami, ilalagay namin ito sa lugar namin na ito sinabi naming kasi yun yung tama, minsan meron kasing iba na pag tinawagan, galit sayo, pag sinabihan mong ganito, galit pa sayo...” [We hear things that are not good about us, but we just let it slip away. But when we know that we are right, we do it in a proper way. There are people who are angry at us because of the reminders we give to them]. (BHW1, Lines 81-85)

“...may mga nagagalit din pala sa amin na mga tao.” [There are people who get angry at us...] (BHW8, Line 687)

With the people being unwelcoming, there is also a tendency for them to not cooperate with the BHWs. As said by Whyte (2020), mistrust is the default response if trust is not built, and mistrust often becomes prominent in resistance to cooperation. To testify:

“...maraming akong na-encounter na hindi nakikipagtulungan, minsan nga, may mga nagagalit pa sa amin, nito namang pandemic, may mga tao na itinatago nila na sila pala ay nagkasakit, inililihim nila.” [I have encountered many people who do not cooperate. There are people who are angry at us, some tried to hide that they are sick and kept it a secret]. (BHW3, Lines 291-293)

“...may mga hindi din nakikipagtulong, nakikicooperate, kaya nahihirapan kami sa response namin.” [There are those who do not cooperate, it makes our job difficult]. (BHW7, Lines 596-597)

In the above statements, it is apparent that it is caused by a lack of trust between the BHWs and the people. In connection, there are also times that the people send BHWs away due to fear and mistrust. Here are some statements:

“...may mga nangyari noon na tinaboy kami kasi natatakot sila na baka positive pala kami, natatakot sila na mahawa...” [There are times that we were pushed away because they are afraid that we might have been infected with the virus]. (BHW7, Lines 595-596)

“Saka may mga tao din na ayaw kaming palalapitin sa kanila dahil daw baka may dala kami na sakit.” [There were also people who did not want us to get closer to them in fear of getting sick]. (BHW8, Lines 687-688)

The statements above show that sometimes, fear over something may cause inconvenience to others. In relation, caused by the unpleasant relationship between the BHWs and the people, the BHWs experienced stress and anxiety. To testify:

“...may posibilidad kasi na madiskrimina kami ng mga iba pang tao, kaya hangga’t maaari, nagpapaabot kami ng panawagan sa kanila na huwag naman sanang ganoon ang mangyayari.” [There is a possibility of us being discriminated because of the nature of our work that is why we call on them not to do so]. (BHW4, Lines 373-375)

“Isa pa nga ay minsan diba nga ay may mga masungit na tao, may mga galit sa amin kahit ginagawa lang naman namin ang trabaho namin, yun na-stress na kami nun.”

[Another thing is that sometimes are rude people, they are angry at us even though we are just doing our job, that’s what stresses us out]. (BHW7, Lines 608-609)

Moreover, in addition to the unkind people of the community, the heavy workload also causes stress to the BHWs. Here are the statements as a proof:

“Mahirap ang trabaho ngunit hindi ko na iniinda dahil kung iindahin ko pa ang mga problema, lalo lang bigat eh” [It is definitely a hard job but I endure it because the more I think about it, the harder it gets]. (BHW5, Lines 444-445)

“Nagdudulot ng stress sa akin yung minsan may mga nagagalit na tao, kasi minsan ang bigat na ng trabaho, kumbaga dumadagdag pa iyon...” [People who are angry at us causes a stress on me. It makes our job even harder]. (BHW8, Lines 692-693)

The statements above are proof that the BHWs’ workload is heavy and it even causes them to feel stressed. Excessive work makes people feel rushed, under pressure, and overwhelmed, resulting in stress (NI Business Info, n.d.). The last cluster under this emergent theme is about the hazards and risks that BHWs face when they perform their jobs. One of the hazards is the virus, especially since the world is under a global pandemic. To prove:

“...natatakot kami na mahawaan ng mga positibo kasi kami ang nag-ha-handle ng mga positive, kami ang nag-monitor, may possibility talaga na may risk kang mahawa sa kanila. Kaya kailangan sa amin na kumpleto ang vaccine, dalawang dose, at isang booster para di mahawaan.” [We are afraid of getting infected as we handle positive patients. We monitor them that’s why there is a risk of getting infected so we needed a complete vaccine, two doses and a booster shot]. (BHW4, Lines 347-350)

“Takot kami. ‘Paano kung mahawa ako’, Paano yung pag uwi ko sa bahay’. Sabi ko, ‘Diyos ko, paano yung mga anak ko?’ [We were scared. ‘What if I get infected?’ ‘What do I do when I get home?’ ‘What about my children?’] (BHW6, Lines 496-498)

The BHWs, like any other human being, are afraid of being infected by the virus too, but what the public sees is the other risks this job has like being infected by other communicable diseases. To testify:

“Dati ang kinatatakutan namin, yung mga TB, mga tigdas, trangkaso kasi nakakahawa talaga yun” [We used to be afraid of TB, measles, the flu because it’s really contagious]. (BHW7, Lines 602-603)

“Bukod sa COVID, may pangamba din kami na baka mahawa kami ng iba pang mga sakit, halimbawa yung mga normal lang, yung ubo, sipon, trangkaso, yung iba naman, yung mga sakit sa balat, yung tuberculosis, saka mga tigdas tigdas.” [Aside from COVID, we are also worrying of the other diseases like cough, colds, flu, and the other like skin diseases, tuberculosis, and measles]. (BHW8, Lines 689-691)

Though these diseases are common, the BHWs do not take them lightly as small diseases can cause life-threatening situations which may cause their life. Being

sick from these diseases also hinders them from serving as a BHW which may lead to a lack of manpower.

**Suggestions from the Ground: Improving the Situation**

In this theme, the BHWs discuss their suggestions to the government to at least make the situation better. They

addressed the standardization of their salary and the increase in the compensation they receive. The BHWs also ask for definite working hours to avoid overworking. Furthermore, they also demand increased government support in terms of facilities and equipment. Lastly, they suggest an expansion in the coverage of health insurance.

**Table 5:** Suggestions from the Ground: Improving the Situation

Theme Clusters	Formulated Meanings
Increased Allowances and Standardized Salary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs demand for a standardized salary to the government.</li> <li>• The BHWs asks for an increase in their monthly allowances to compensate their work.</li> </ul>
Definite Working Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The working hours must be set to avoid overworking of the BHWs.</li> </ul>
Increased Support in terms of Equipment and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government should provide more modern and suitable facilities to cater the needs of the BHWs.</li> <li>• The government should prioritize the upgrade of equipment.</li> </ul>
Expanded Health Insurance Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BHWs demand for the expansion of the coverage of their health insurance in case of them getting sick.</li> </ul>

The informants discussed their suggestions for improving the situation of BHWs. The first theme cluster under this emergent theme is the BHWs’ requests regarding their benefits and compensations. They specifically ask for a standardized salary to provide for their financial needs.

“Hindi pa rin kami naa-appreciate, kasi kahit noong nagkaroon ng pandemic, wala namang dagdag allowance, benefits, ganon pa rin naman kaya medyo nakakalungkot lang talaga. Kasi kung paano yung bago mag pandemic, ganon pa rin.” [We are still not appreciated, when the pandemic happened, there was even no additional allowance and benefits. It saddens me because it is still the same]. (BHW3, Lines 321-323)

“Sa gobyerno, sana ay magkaroon pa sana ng mas mataas na benefits, sa sahod naman sana ay magkaroon kami ng kumbaga ay fixed na sahod.” [For the government, I hope there will be an even higher benefits. In terms of salary, I hope we will receive fixed salaries]. (BHW4, Lines 388-389)

In the suggestions given by the informants above, a standardized salary is necessary because the compensation will assure the employee that the organization appreciates and recognizes the work they do (Wooll, 2017). After all, BHWs are needed in the primary healthcare system. In connection, they also ask for increased allowances and benefits as compensation for their work. To testify, here are some statements:

“Sa gobyerno, kanila sanang makita ang mga sakripisyo namin habang kami ay nagse-serve. Sana rin ay kung makita nila iyon, magbigay naman sana sila ng mga kumbaga ay reward sa mga BHW dahil sa tingin ko naman, deserve naman namin na maappreciate man lang kahit sa maliit na mga paraan.” [For the government, I hope that they see our sacrifices while we serve. I also hope that if they have seen that, they will give some reward to the BHWs because I think we deserve to be appreciated at least in small ways]. (BHW3, Lines 330-333)

“Dahil na rin kasi sa bigat ng mga hamon na aming kinaharap sa pagtugon sa pandemya sa mga barrio, sana ay madagdagan naman ang aming mga benepisyo...”

[Perhaps it is because of the weight of the challenges we face in responding to the pandemic in the barrios, hopefully our benefits will at least increase]. (BHW5, Lines 446-447)

Apart from the low salaries and allowances they receive, they are also overworked because they do not have enough resting time. They suggest setting definite working hours for BHWs. To confirm this:

“Sana din magkaroon na ng oras yung trabaho namin para di na masosobrahan ang oras.” [I hope that we have a set time for work so we do not get overworked]. (BHW7, Line 628)

“Sana magkaroon ng naka-set na oras ng trabaho, kasi ngayong pandemya nasubukan ang tatag namin kasi halos walang pahinga eh.” [I hope our work have scheduled time, because we were really challenged by the pandemic, we almost have no rest]. (BHW 8, Lines 716-718)

According to the International Labor Organization (2018), definite working time will increase the productivity of an employee while safeguarding their physical and mental health.

Even though they lack adequate rest, the informants still want to work and help other people when needed. In relation, they are asking the government to provide more modern facilities that are very suitable to cater to the needs of the community. To justify:

“Mga kagamitang maayos ay center sana na mas kumpleto ang gamit...” [There should be good and enough equipment in the center]. (BHW5, Lines 449-450)

“Yung health center sana ay ma-upgrade ba o marenovate...” [I hope they will upgrade and renovate the health center]. (BHW7, Line 626)

Aside from the facilities, they suggest to the government that it is also crucial to have proper and upgraded equipment to be used at their facilities. It is not just for the health workers who will use the apparatus but also for the people they are going to serve. To prove:

“Ang mga bagay na gusto kong hilingin ay magkaroon sana tayo ng halimbawa ay magkaroon sana tayo ng

libreng gamot lalo na para sa may mga sakit sa panahon kasi ngayon, hindi kaya ng mga may kapwa nating may sakit ang makapag-pagamot.” [One thing I want to ask is for us to have free supplies of medicine, for those people who could not afford it]. (BHW2, Lines 272-275)

“Pakisama na rin yung mga kagamitan at aparato kasi luma na yung mga gamit eh.” [I hope they will include the apparatuses in the improvement as they are already getting old]. (BHW7, Lines 626-627)

The last cluster discusses expanding the health insurance coverage for the BHWs if they get sick or hurt. As part of their duty, they work all day, get exposed, and are said to be one of the most vulnerable persons during the pandemic. To further explain:

“Sa panahon naman na kami, ang nangagailangan, sana ay matulungan nila kami. Kung magkaroon kami ng sakit, mabigyan sana kami ng priority...” [I hope they will also extend their hands when the time comes that we are the ones who are sick and need help]. (BHW7, Lines 389-391)

“Sana kung kami ay makapag-uwi ng virus sa aming mga bahay, matulungan sana kami ng gobyerno na makapag-pagamot, makaraos ganun ba.” [I hope that if we get sick with the virus, the government will help us get treatment and recover]. (BHW5, Line 450-452)

The BHWs only want help, support, and appreciation for their work because they are the primary attendants of the health system in barangays or communities. The government must listen to them and provide for their needs as health workers. When the government listens to them, the BHWs can offer better services.

## CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data gathered from the interviews, the researchers found out that Barangay Health Workers have difficulty performing their tasks since they face different challenges. With the significant statements analyzed, the following conclusions are derived:

- There are various reasons why the informants chose to be BHWs, it includes the allowances they receive, the experiences and knowledge, through relatives' and friends' recommendations. Furthermore, the most common response from the informants is the will of serving to the community and help others.

- During the pandemic, most informants adjusted almost all aspects of their work, including the protocols they needed to observe and the extended working hours.

- In terms of work-life balance, most of them lose time with their families. They also said that they would balance their priorities when an outbreak or surge comes.

- The BHWs experienced numerous challenges in performing their work, including inhospitable communities and various hazards and risks. Some of these challenges emerged even before the pandemic. It includes low allowances and benefits, dilapidated facilities, malfunctioning apparatuses, and stress.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After arriving at the study's conclusions, the researchers formulated the following recommendations:

For the Barangay Health Workers. This study found that Barangay Health Workers need to be well-equipped with the required knowledge and skills; hence, continuous attendance in training and seminars is essential. Furthermore, BHWs should fully recognize their duties and responsibilities as the front line of primary health care. Moreover, establishing a harmonious working environment with co-workers and supervisors is ideal for lessening the pressure from the work.

For the Community and the Public. The study proves that BHWs have been experiencing unkind treatment from the communities they have been serving. As recipients of health care services of the BHWs, it is a must that they treat them as important figures in their respective communities. Appreciating their hard work is a way to show gratitude to them. Moreover, the public's trust and cooperation are also essential in BHWs' duties; hence, the public is encouraged to give their trust so that the BHWs will not have a hard time attending to them.

For the Local and National Government. This study is substantial evidence that the long-existing challenges experienced by BHWs are still prevalent up to this day. The government should provide enough compensation and advantages to the BHWs because they are the backbone of primary healthcare. Similarly, the salary must undergo standardization through legislation. Furthermore, the BHWs also experience difficulties performing their jobs due to a lack of equipment. The Local Government Units can solve this concern through proper budgetary allocation. Moreover, the government should fully implement Republic Act No. 7883, which provides benefits and incentives that will boost the morale of BHWs while performing their duties well.

For Future Researchers. The study may be conducted in a new context and angle; in the case of this study, the pandemic's impact and the challenges experienced by the BHWs are the main focus.

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