

CHAPTER 6

Managing paperwork

Learning objectives

After studying this chapter the health worker should be able to:

- **organize an office in a health unit**
- **write referral and other official letters**
- **set up a filing system**
- **arrange and index a health-unit office system.**

Paperwork, mainly correspondence and the maintenance and use of records, is an essential part of the management of a health service, and almost all health activities involve paperwork. Its quality and efficiency play a large part in the effectiveness of health care activities and programmes. Without a well ordered records system, for example, neither clinical care nor community health work can be monitored or controlled. Paperwork is the communication system (correspondence), the information system (reports) and the memory system (records, registers) of a health service. This chapter deals with the writing of referral and other official letters, and with the organization of a records system.

6.1 The functions of an office in a health centre

An office is a place where paperwork is done and documents and letters are stored. It is not always a whole room: it may be simply a table or a desk or a corner of a room.

Some examples of the paperwork essential to the main functions of a health unit are shown on the next page.