Consultations complete for new Queensland Health multicultural policy

More than 150 multicultural health stakeholders have provided valuable input into the development of a new Queensland Health multicultural policy.

The stakeholders were consulted between October and November 2011 as part of a statewide engagement process led by Queensland Health Multicultural Services.

Queensland Health Multicultural Services Director Ellen Hawes said the process was important to ensure the needs of community groups, multicultural organisations and Queensland Health were represented in the new policy and implementation standards.

"With the move towards Local Health and Hospital Networks and more localised decision making, it is important that a strong policy is put in place to provide consistent guidance and standards for implementation," Ellen said.

"By consulting directly with a range of internal and external stakeholders, we have been able to get a current view of the issues being faced by patients and staff when it comes to multicultural health."

Topics covered in the consultations included:

- staff education and training on the use of interpreters
- the number and quality of interpreters
- engagement with community leaders and non-government organisations
- recruitment and retention strategies and activities
- embedding of multicultural health considerations in strategic planning activities
- multicultural health data collection and analysis
- the continuation of cultural competence training for staff
- service approaches for special needs populations.

"The issues raised by stakeholders are currently being considered in the context of the restructuring of Queensland Health and the establishment of Local Health and Hospital Networks," Ellen said.

“The new Queensland Health multicultural policy and implementation guidelines are expected to be published later this year."

For more information on the development of the new Queensland Health Multicultural Policy, contact Queensland Health Multicultural Services on multicultural@health.qld.gov.au.

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Bienvenue (Bienvenue is the French word for welcome.)

Welcome to the Summer/Autumn edition of the Queensland Health Multicultural Services newsletter.

This edition highlights a number of useful new resources for health care providers.

New data reports were recently published which look at the health of the Pacific Islander and Maori communities, and the Australian South Sea Islander community, and should help to expand health care providers’ understanding of the health needs of some of Queensland’s most disadvantaged communities.

These reports have already generated significant...
Pacific Islander and Maori health reports

A new report which examines ways to improve the health of Queensland’s Pacific Islander and Maori populations has been published by Queensland Health.

The Queensland Health Response to Pacific Islander and Maori Health Needs Assessment recommends a number of strategies to address health inequalities within these communities, including addressing health literacy issues and improving the cultural competence of health care providers.

Queensland Health Multicultural Services director Ellen Hawes said the report was an important step in improving the health status of Queensland’s Pacific Islander and Maori populations and had already led to more than $5 million being invested into three different health programs.

Ellen said funds had been allocated to Children’s Health Services under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health to implement the Good Start Program, which is a health promotion program for Pacific Islander families and children over the next four years.

“The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland have also received funding to conduct culturally tailored programs under the Swap It Don’t Stop It and QUIT campaigns,” Ellen said.

“These programs will prioritise Pacific Islander and Maori communities.”

Ellen said these communities were some of the most socially disadvantaged in the state and, as a result, often experience chronic disease and other health problems at a higher rate than the wider population.

“The strategies outlined in the report are practical solutions for improving health outcomes and addressing health inequalities,” she said.

The Pacific Islander and Maori communities were identified by the Queensland Government in 2008-09 as whole-of-government priority populations.

Queensland Health’s response to this prioritisation was to conduct a health needs assessment of these communities so that an effective response could be developed.

Queensland Health Multicultural Services engaged directly with 191 members and leaders of Queensland’s Pacific Islander and Maori communities and drew data from literature reviews, Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection, Australian Bureau of Statistics, and a survey of 54 health service providers.

This data was collected and presented in a series of health profiles which examine the health status of the Fijian, Maori, Papua New Guinean and Samoan communities in Queensland.

A good start for a healthy future

Preventing chronic disease and tackling obesity in Pacific Islander and Maori children and their families is the focus of a new $4.6 million, four year Children’s Health Services initiative.

The Good Start Program was funded by the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health and aims to support families to build their skills, knowledge and confidence when it comes to healthy eating, exercise and lifestyle.

Good Start Program manager Sebastien Brignano said the program would help Pacific Islander and Maori children to get a good start on the road to a healthy future.

“There is a high prevalence of chronic disease in Pacific Islander communities and overweight and obesity in children,” Mr Brignano said.

“We hope this program will get the new generation healthier and support parents to change habits and be healthy role models.”

Eight multicultural health workers from seven target communities have now been recruited and will be trained to deliver nutrition, physical activity and community development information within their local communities.

Community members will be invited to cooking sessions, supermarket tours and nutrition education sessions on various topics including ‘eating on a budget’.

Continued on page 3
Australian South Sea Islander health data report

A new report which analyses health and illness patterns in the Australian South Sea Islander population has been published by Queensland Health.

The Health of Australian South Sea Islander people in Queensland - an analysis of hospital separation data report found that the Australian South Sea Islander population had higher standardised hospitalisations for all conditions examined compared to the total Queensland population.

Hospital separation rates are presented for a range of conditions including, coronary heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, external causes, musculoskeletal diseases, asthma, and total avoidable and preventable diabetes complications.

The report was based on a literature review, analysis of Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection and consultations with internal and external stakeholders.

Queensland Health Multicultural Services Director Ellen Hawes said that while the report was an important step in understanding the unique health issues faced by the community, caution must be used when interpreting the data as there were a number of limitations to the research.

“The two main problems faced when compiling the report was that the size of the Australian South Sea Islander population is not accurately reported, and that hospital separation data is dependent on the accuracy with which people have been identified in hospital records,” Ellen said.

Due to these and other limitations listed in the report, these findings may best be considered as a starting point for further research into the health status of the Australian South Sea Islander community in Queensland.”

The report was developed in response to the Queensland Government Action Plan for the Australian South Sea Islander Community which identified several actions for Queensland Health.

These actions included investigating health and illness patterns in the Australian South Sea Islander population to inform the development of strategies to address health disadvantage in the community.


A good start for a healthy future

Continued from page 2

Health kiosks will be placed throughout the communities and feature video messages from community leaders about the importance of nutrition and physical activity to promote healthy choices.

“Behaviour change is more likely to happen when the information is culturally tailored and delivered by local people and community leaders,” Mr Brignano said.

The program will initially target Cook Islander, Fijian, Fiji Indian, Maori, Papua New Guinean, Samoan and Tongan communities in the Brisbane area, before growing to support communities in South East Queensland and North Queensland.

Mr Brignano said the four year program would run until 2015, with sustainable change for the communities being a major focus.

For more information contact the Good Start Program on 3250 8605 or email goodstart@health.qld.gov.au.

Biovenue

investment in new programs and have also provided some impetus to further expand our understanding of the health needs of each of these communities.

These reports are a culmination of more than two years worth of work and mark a significant achievement for Queensland Health Multicultural Services.

On a sad note, I would like to wish a fond farewell to former staff members Marina Chand, Gail Hyslop, Shelley Kulperger and Jasmine Pivac, who have recently moved on from the team to exciting new projects inside and outside of Queensland Health.

Each of these valued people has contributed significantly to the success of the team and will be greatly missed.

Ellen Hawes
Director Queensland Health Multicultural Services
Sexual health information for CALD communities

When Burmese Bilingual Health Worker Evelyn Thwe Thwe Win Pe presents workshops on blood-borne viruses and sexual health to her community, the response is often overwhelming.

Evelyn works for the Ethnic Community Council of Queensland’s HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and Sexual Health Program and regularly receives feedback which indicates that information about these types of diseases are not reaching many culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Feedback such as, ‘We had never heard about hepatitis’, ‘Please come back for another workshop, because no one has ever explained health issues to us before’ and, ‘We are so happy to have a workshop because we feel so isolated from the community’, indicate that the language and cultural barriers many CALD community members face when accessing health services and information are significant.

Using community languages and their unique understanding of the community’s culture, ECCQ’s HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and Sexual Health Program is well placed to provide education on sensitive topics such as testing, prevention, visiting GPs and sexual health checks.

In the past twelve months, the team of 13 bilingual health workers have made 200 referrals to GPs and clinics, and conducted 236 workshops with approximately 2000 participants from nine different CALD communities.

In order to best support the bilingual health workers, ECCQ recently developed a comprehensive Resource Kit.

Each kit contains workshop activities, translated brochures, children’s activities and a set of culturally-appropriate flip charts on HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections.

The flip charts help meet the needs of participants with low literacy levels and allow people to learn about sexual health in an interactive and informal setting. Rather than being prescriptive, the kit provides the bilingual health workers with tools they can adapt to their audience and setting and identifies them as a credible source of health information in their community.

For more information on the program, to contact a bilingual health worker, or to order resources, please contact Laura Swanson on resources@eccq.com.au, 3844 9166 or go to www.eccq.com.au.

Better mental health for culturally diverse Queenslanders

An innovative mental health program for culturally and linguistically diverse communities is helping to deliver improved mental health awareness and understanding by focussing on mind, body and relationships.

The Well-Being Program is delivered by the Multicultural Centre for Mental Health and Well Being – Harmony Place and aims to build capacity to enhance the emotional health and well-being of individuals and communities, increase social capital, and maximise participatory citizenship.

It achieves this through a variety of activities including Tai Chi, Yoga and fitness activities, as well as sessions on managing stress, depression and improving self-esteem.

Well-Being Program Team Leader Beatriz Martinez said the program had received a great deal of positive feedback from participants.

“We have seen patients come away with new hope instilled, an increased belief in themselves and an appreciation of the present moment as a key to moving forward,” Beatriz said.

“The activities and information presented in the sessions generate discussion on mental health and aim to break down the stigma around mental illness and develop confidence for participants to access the appropriate assistance when needed.

“Mental health community education as per the Harmony Place model is an efficient and effective way to prevent mental health issues from becoming major mental illness,” she said.

“The costs of treatment are lessened because of early intervention.”

For more information, please contact Beatriz Martinez on 3848 1600 or go to www.harmonyplace.org.au/default.asp?contentID=585.
**Time to talk diabetes...in Greek!**

A new online resource which aims to help members of Australia’s Greek-speaking community living with diabetes to better understand and manage their condition is now available.

Victorian nursing and healthcare provider Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) has published the new Information on Diabetes in Greek talking book to help educate Greek-speaking people about living with diabetes and to assist them to deal with their own condition in a more informed way.

The talking book is a multimedia tool that can be viewed on a computer, and like any book, the presentation is split into different chapters, each dealing with a specific aspect of diabetes. In total, ten important diabetes topics are covered.

People can choose to read the information on screen in Greek or English, or to listen to the information in Greek. The information sheets can also be printed in Greek or English for easy use and offline reference.

RDNS Manager – Diversity Jaklina Michael said diabetes does not discriminate and is the fastest growing health problem in Australia, with almost 1500 people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes every week.

“At RDNS, we are committed to assisting all people to learn about their health and to better manage their health problems. Information on Diabetes in Greek is one way in which we can help people in the Greek community to do this,” Jaklina said.

The Information on Diabetes in Greek package was developed by RDNS in collaboration with Australian Greek Welfare Society and Aspin Group.

Its development also involved Greek community members who participated in audio recordings and photography; and community members from the Australian Greek Welfare Society who participated in the testing of the information.


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**Ageing and multiculturalism**

Queensland’s population is increasingly characterised by two key trends: a greater diversity of people, religions, ethnicity, languages and cultures, and an increasingly aging population.

As a result, aged care service providers are faced with increasing demands for culturally appropriate care.

Diversicare is able to assist aged care service providers to better understand the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse clients (CALD) and better prepare staff to provide culturally competent care.

A number of government funded initiatives, events and services are available throughout Queensland to help aged care service providers to deliver culturally appropriate care and to inform CALD communities about services they can access.

Some key activities include:

- Face to face cross-cultural workshops and training in areas such as cultural awareness, communication, working with interpreters, lifestyle and leisure, and culture and end of life care
- Accredited training (HLTHIR403C Work effectively with culturally diverse clients and co-workers)
- Collaborative workshops in dementia, behaviour management, continence, torture and trauma, and palliative care from a CALD perspective
- Improving links between aged care service providers and CALD communities through social activities and interaction
- The development of resources and information for service providers to better understand the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds.

Services are free of charge and available throughout Queensland (including rural and remote areas). For more information, please visit [www.diversicare.com.au](http://www.diversicare.com.au) or call 3846 1099.
Breaking the chains of female genital mutilation

Women whose lives have been affected by the practice of female genital mutilation have shared their experiences as part of a new audio resource launched by Family Planning Queensland’s Multicultural Women’s Health Education project recently.

The Breaking the chains audio CD includes powerful and deeply moving stories told by women from diverse cultural backgrounds about their personal experiences of female genital mutilation.

The resource aims to prevent the practice and increase women’s access to information and services to enhance their sexual and reproductive health.

Also available is the latest poster which sends a powerful message that female genital mutilation is a dangerous and damaging practice.

With a fourteen year history, the Multicultural Women’s Health Education project is guided by an advisory committee made up of women from many of the regions around the world where female genital mutilation is practiced.

The project and the resources it produces play a vital role in the community to advocate for, and empower, women whose lives and health have been affected by the practice.

More than fifty people from a range community and government organisations attended the launch held in November 2011 at MultiLink Community Services in Woodridge.

To obtain a copy of the free poster or audio CD for your community organisation, private or public hospital, local or regional clinic, doctor’s office, or other community service, contact the project coordinator Odette Tewfik on 3250 0250 or email otewfik@fpq.com.au.

The Family Planning Queensland Multicultural Women’s Health Education project aims to prevent the practice of female genital mutilation and increase access to information and services to improve the sexual and reproductive health of those women impacted by the practice.

To learn more about the project or other resources available in different languages, please visit www.fpq.com.au/education/multicultural/projects_fgm.php.

Next edition (Winter):

- Deadline for story submissions: 4 May 2012
- Publication date: 9 June 2012
- Submission guidelines: words - 200-300 images - jpg format
- Submit to: multicultural@health.qld.gov.au