Welcome

In the first issue of this newsletter I wrote about the history of the Queensland Health Multicultural Program and the people who have helped us get to this point. In the past three years we have taken huge steps in our mission to improve and maintain the health and well being of multicultural communities, families and individuals in Queensland.

Reading through this second issue, I noticed one word recurring throughout many of the articles. We have new resources, a new implementation plan, new staff and new services on the way. The word new seems to be popping up with real regularity and, to me, that is a sure sign that we are achieving the many objectives that have been set under the Queensland Health Strategic Plan for Multicultural Health 2007-2012.

To go along with these new achievements, the Queensland Health Multicultural Program has been renamed Multicultural Services. This name change is not only cosmetic, but really describes a significant shift that has occurred in the program during the past year or more. Instead of a program that implements projects, we have become a service provider that delivers real, ongoing multicultural services to clients, staff and the department.

This shift to service provider has been marked by the establishment of a new cross cultural training service. The new service is currently being developed within the team and it is envisaged that the first training sessions will be delivered towards the end of 2009. It is an exciting time for the team and another step on the path to creating dependable health care and better health for ALL Queenslanders.

Ellen Hawes
Manager, Multicultural Services

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Interpreter service awarded for excellence

The success of the Queensland Health Interpreter Service was recognised at the inaugural Queensland Health Awards for Excellence event held in April 2009.

The service was selected ahead of a number of other highly regarded projects to win the award in the Improving the Health and Well-being of Queenslanders category.

Multicultural Services Manager Ellen Hawes said the success of the program could be largely attributed to the hard work, dedication and commitment of the interpreter service quality officers and the district interpreter service coordinators.

“Since we launched the Queensland Health Interpreter Service in November 2007, there has been a huge increase in the number of interpreter sessions being booked across the state,” Ellen said.

“In its first 18 months of operation, the service has resulted in a 177% increase in the use of interpreters and resulted in an annual cost saving of around $600,000 a year.

“The overall quality of interpreter services has also been improved and Queensland Health now provides approximately 45,000 interpreter sessions each year in over 100 languages.

“The service has been so successful that is being investigated as a model for a whole-of-government interpreter service.”

The Queensland Health Interpreter Service was developed by Multicultural Services in response to community and internal reviews in 2004 which found there was a poor use of interpreter services around the state.

Click here for more information about the Queensland Health Interpreter Service or contact Multicultural Services on 3328 9880 or email multicultural@health.qld.gov.au.

The Queensland Health Awards for Excellence celebrate the dedication, innovation and vision of Queensland Health teams who deliver high-quality healthcare programs to improve the lives of all Queenslanders.

More than 130 nominations were received for the inaugural Queensland Health Awards for Excellence across six categories.

Click here for a complete list of the winners in each category.

Pregnancy chapter expands multicultural clinical support resource folder

A new chapter exploring the pregnancy, birth and post-natal care practices of women from multicultural communities will soon be added to the Queensland Health Multicultural Clinical Support Resource folder.

It provides health workers with information to identify factors among people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds which may affect their use of antenatal services, their care during pregnancy, labour and birth, and postnatal care.

Multicultural Services Principal Project Officer Marina Chand said the new chapter would provide health workers with the information they needed to provide culturally appropriate care to women from all backgrounds.

“The new chapter covers topics such as maternity services overseas, cultural assessment, attitudes to modes of delivery, psychological and social issues, group participation, and reproductive loss and grief,” Marina said.

“It also provides much needed information and advice on the issue of female genital mutilation.”

The chapter features 11 different cultural profiles which provide guidance on communication; health related beliefs and practices; pregnancy, birth and after birth practices; and infant care and feeding.

These profiles are for the Burmese (Karen, Chin and Rohingya), Chinese, Fijian, Filipino, Japanese, Indian, Malaysian, Papua New Guinean, Samoan, Sudanese and Vietnamese communities.

The chapter was developed by a team from Monash University with addition clinical and cultural input from Queensland Health and other multicultural services organisations.

Click here for more information or to download the new chapter.
Implementation plan outlines multicultural health initiatives

A new plan outlining the initiatives that Queensland Health will implement to improve the delivery of health services to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities is now available.

Multicultural Services Manager Ellen Hawes said the 2009-10 Implementation Plan builds on the actions already implemented under the Queensland Health Strategic Plan for Multicultural Health 2007-2012.

“This year we will continue to refine and support existing initiatives, as well as carrying out new projects such as the Pacific Islander Health Needs Assessment and Consultation Project, and implementing a cross cultural training program across the state.”

Ellen said the new implementation plan was significant because it provided an opportunity to review and improve on the achievements of the past two years.

“An important part of the plan for this year is to review the existing initiatives to make sure they are providing the best service and achieving the goals and objectives that were set at the start of the five year strategy,” she said.

Ellen said another significant addition to the implementation plan was a new Organisational Cultural Competency Framework.

“The framework is like a roadmap for how we can develop cultural competency at an organisational level. It identifies eight areas which require action if you wish to develop a culturally competent organisation.”

The eight action areas and Queensland Health’s response are:
- **Interpreter services**
  - The implementation of, and ongoing service improvements to, the Queensland Health Interpreter Service.
- **Community engagement**
  - Facilitating the engagement of CALD communities in the development of policies, plans and programs.
- **Resource development and translation**
  - The development of resources to support staff in providing inclusive services and to assist people who have culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds in maintaining or improving their health.

**Inclusive recruitment and retention**
- Working in partnership with human resources and workforce planning areas to develop and implement inclusive recruitment and retention strategies.

**Culturally competent staff**
- Building the knowledge and skills of Queensland Health staff in providing culturally competent health care and developing inclusive policies and plans.

**Leadership and partnership**
- Working with Multicultural Affairs Queensland, the community sector, Health Service Districts and other jurisdictions to share knowledge and collaboratively implement strategies on improving the health status of CALD communities.

**Data collection and analysis**
- Collecting and analysing data on the health of CALD communities and equitable access to services.

**Special needs populations**
- Implementing dedicated strategies for special needs populations including:
  - monitoring the outcomes of Refugee Health Queensland, the new statewide refugee assessment service
  - conducting a health needs assessment for Pacific Islanders.

These action areas are supported by four foundation areas that underpin all activities. These areas are management commitment, cross cultural capabilities, culturally inclusive systems and services, and EQuIP standards.

[Click here](#) to download the 2009-10 Implementation Plan.
Video Remote Interpreting Pilot Project

A Multicultural Services joint pilot project with Telehealth which connects deaf patients in regional areas to accredited interpreters via videoconference has been a resounding success.

The Video Remote Interpreting Pilot Project uses the existing Telehealth network to connect accredited Auslan (Australian sign language) interpreters to deaf patients in regional areas.

Multicultural Services Principal Interpreter Service Quality Officer – Northern Libby Sterling said the pilot project, which finished in August, can help to overcome a national shortage of accredited Auslan interpreters.

“It can be extremely difficult to arrange an accredited onsite interpreter in regional Queensland,” Libby said.

“While telephone interpreting can be an acceptable alternative for spoken languages, it is clearly not suitable for deaf clients who use sign language.

“By using the existing Telehealth network, we can now connect interpreters from anywhere in the state to a patient in a Queensland Health facility with access to videoconferencing services.”

The pilot project was a joint initiative between the Queensland Health Interpreter Service and Telehealth. It was run from Cairns and included facilities in Townsville, Mackay, Gold Coast, Thursday Island and Mossman.

The pilot ran from March to April and July to August 2009, and consisted of a number of role-play medical scenarios between deaf patients and clinicians using an interpreter based at another facility.

Libby said video remote interpreting could also be used for spoken languages when travel requirements make onsite interpreting difficult or impossible or if visual contact is required.

“Instead of spending time and money transporting an interpreter to a regional area for just a couple of hours work, videoconferencing makes it possible to provide accredited interpreting services in a time and cost effective manner,” she said.

“While onsite interpreting is still the preferred method for providing interpreting services in some instances, the use of video conferencing provides significant cost and time savings. It also makes interpreting services available in communities that have never been able to access these services before.”

The pilot project is currently being assessed in consultation with the deaf community, service providers, Auslan interpreters and Queensland Health staff for a possible statewide roll out later in 2009.
Pacific Islander health project

The Pacific Islander and Maori Health Needs Assessment and Consultation Project reached a new milestone in August with the completion of the project’s 15th and final community focus group.

Multicultural Services Principal Project Officer Marina Chand said more than 190 members of the Maori, Samoan, Fijian, and Papua New Guinean communities provided information about their people’s health issues.

“I would like to thank everyone who participated in the focus groups and helped make them such a success, especially our bilingual facilitators who did a great job organising the groups,” Marina said.

“We are now analysing the information that was generated and will complement the data provided by the Health Statistics Centre. This data has already shown some significant disparities between the health of Pacific Islanders and other Queenslanders.”

Multicultural Services Senior Project Officer Hanamenn Hunt said the next phase of the project would involve discussing Pacific Islander and Maori health with clinicians and other health workers that work with these communities.

“Clinicians and other health workers can provide a unique insight into the health issues faced by these communities and will provide important advice about appropriate recommendations and solutions,” Hanamenn said.

The Pacific Islander and Maori Health Needs Assessment and Consultation Project is due for completion by the end of November 2009. The project aims to assess the health needs of people from the Maori, Samoan, Fijian, and Papua New Guinean communities and make recommendations about how to address these issues. The project is working in conjunction with some of the chiefs and leaders of these communities, who are providing valuable advice and direction to the project. Click here for more information.

New ward communication resources

Queensland Health staff can now communicate with a wider range of culturally and linguistically diverse people after six new languages were added to the Ward Communication Tool.

Reference cards featuring basic words and phrases in Auslan, Burmese, Hmong, Kirundi, Lao and Thai are available on QHEPS, bringing the total number of languages to 30.

The Ward Communication Tool contains words commonly used in hospital wards, together with a translation of the word, a picture and a phonetic (sounds like) spelling.

The tool was developed by Multicultural Services to help staff initiate communication with non-English speaking people about simple day-to-day issues.

It is not meant as a replacement for professional interpreters, but can be used to communicate simple instructions and needs. Feedback has shown that staff often copy the required page and include it with the patient’s charts to aid communication.

Click here for more information about the Ward Communication Tool. (Queensland Health staff only)

Multicultural health literature


A Compendium of Social Inclusion Indicators by the Australian Social Inclusion Board (July 2009) http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au (NESS is identified as a priority population group).

This is my home: belonging, disability and diversity by the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (August 2009) http://www.netda.org.au.
Profile: Brian Dinh – Podiatrist
Bayside Community Aged Care Services, Metro South Health Service District

What is your cultural background?
I am originally from Vietnam.

When did you arrive in Australia?
Christmas 1979.

What is the biggest difference between Australian and Vietnamese culture?
Openness – Australian culture allows you to be far more direct when communicating. You need to be a little more diplomatic when communicating with Vietnamese people.

How long have you worked for Queensland Health?
I have worked for Queensland Health for almost 20 years.

What are the main multicultural communities in your region?
We see a lot of people from Finnish and other northern European backgrounds in Redlands.

What is the biggest health issue facing these communities?
Like most communities, diabetes is a major issue.

New additions to Multicultural Services team

The Multicultural Services team recently welcomed five new staff members who will help to expand the delivery of effective multicultural services and resources across Queensland Health.

Gail Hyslop, Jasmine Pivac, Angel Bogicevic, Shelley Kulperger and Theo Georga each bring different skills and experience to the team and are welcome additions as we move into the third year of the Queensland Health Strategic Plan for Multicultural Health 2007-2012.

Gail and Jasmine are currently developing a statewide multicultural education and training program to help Queensland Health staff better service clients from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Theo is developing and maintaining a range of multicultural health resources, including the website, and Shelley is working on projects in community engagement, chronic disease, and recruitment and retention. Angel provides administrative support for the Interpreter Service Information System.

Upcoming events

Gold Coast Multicultural Festival 2009
11 October 2009
Evandale Parklands, Bundall
Contact: Gold Coast Multicultural Festival Association,
phone/Fax 07/5510 3340; email focus@orthelief.com.au
or web: http://gcoastmulticulturalfestival.org

Qld Multicultural Festival 2009
18 October 2009
Roma Street Parkland, Brisbane
Contact: Queensland Multicultural Festival, email
qldmulticulturalfestival@communities.qld.gov.au or
event/qld-multicultural-festival