

## **JOINT POSITION STATEMENT ON CULTURALLY DIVERSE CONSUMER PARTICIPATION**

**Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health & Health Issues Centre**

### **Expanding consumer and community participation in the health sector**

Active involvement of consumers is integral to the development, implementation and evaluation of effective and appropriate health care. Health services need to recognise and understand the heterogeneity of the community that they serve. When planning implementing and evaluating consumer and community participation strategies, health agencies need to ensure that they include people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups in these strategies.

### **Rationale**

The Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health (CEH) and Health Issues Centre (HIC) believe that meaningful consumer participation in the health sector needs to reflect the multicultural society in which we live.

HIC works to support health service providers to engage and improve their engagement with consumers and communities more broadly. We undertake research, policy analysis and provide advice to the sector about consumer engagement strategies.

CEH works with the Victorian Health Sector to develop solutions that improve responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity. As the strength of consumer participation strategies grows, CEH is receiving more inquiries and requests for information about consumer participation in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Consequently, the agency has an interest in increasing health sector knowledge in this area.

Both CEH and HIC, because of their respective areas of expertise, have decided to work in partnership to improve the information, resources and advice that exists to support health service providers to develop consumer participation strategies that engage the diverse communities that they serve.

HIC and CEH believe that health agencies need to recognise the impact of cultural diversity on consumer and community participation, and expand the processes, strategies and methodologies to be inclusive of consumers from a wide range of CALD communities. CEH and HIC believe that existing consumer participation strategies in the health sector do not adequately involve people from non-English speaking backgrounds or ethnic communities generally.

## **Shared Goals**

CEH and HIC will promote the benefits of developing a better understanding of cultural heterogeneity in communities in Victoria for health agencies. We will provide information, advice, resources and support to help build the capacity of the health sector to involve culturally and linguistically diverse communities in consumer and community participation activities.

CEH and HIC will work together to support health services and related organisations to:

1. Identify the information needs, knowledge gaps and cultural beliefs relevant to greater participation from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in their services
2. Resource consumer and community participation strategies to support greater participation from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
3. Identify effective models and culturally appropriate strategies for consumer engagement from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
4. Identify the diversity of interests and stakeholders in the culturally and linguistically diverse community served by the health service, and involve these stakeholders in the expansion of consumer and community participation activities and processes
5. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of consumer and community participation at involving consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

CEH and HIC will work together to support health services to achieve the above developing training and resources specifically relating to culturally and linguistically diverse consumer participation. Both organisations will also work together to increase research in the area of culturally and linguistically diverse consumer participation in the health sector, and will actively seek Government support for a culturally and linguistically diverse health agenda in consumer participation.

## **Joint Actions**

- CEH and the National Resource Centre for Consumer Participation In Health prepare a package of information from its current resources on involving consumers from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in consumer and community participation strategies in the health sector
- CEH and HIC explore opportunities to expand sectoral knowledge and skills in culturally and linguistically diverse consumer participation and engagement

- That CEH and HIC develop a research proposal and seek funding to explore barriers to greater involvement from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in consumer and community participation activities in the health sector
- CEH and HIC approach the Department of Human Services (DHS) to fund a review of effective strategies and methodologies for involving culturally and linguistically diverse communities in consumer and community participation activities in the health sector and to develop a policy on supporting consumer and community participation from CALD communities in Consumer Advisory Committees (CACs) specifically, and in the development of health care in Victoria more broadly
- CEH and HIC explore opportunities to provide training and develop and disseminate resources to the health sector to improve the capacity of the workforce to achieve inclusive consumer participation.

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To be reviewed annually