

How Healthy is your Division's Approach to Aboriginal Health?

Introduction

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a \$1.6 billion *National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes* to address the target of closing the life expectancy gap within a generation.

The Commonwealth Government will contribute \$805.5 million over four years. This major investment aims to prevent and better manage chronic disease by tackling risk factors, improving chronic disease management in primary care, improving follow-up care, and increasing the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective health care to Indigenous Australians. State and Territory Governments will also contribute to these outcomes and implement other priority areas of the *National Partnership Agreement*.

Complete this checklist to assess how healthy your Divisions approach to Aboriginal Health is...

Action Area 1: What do you know about your local Aboriginal population?

- How many Aboriginal people reside within your Division?
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- Do you know where the Aboriginal people in your area go to access general practice services?
 Yes
 No
- Can you name the place/s where Aboriginal people are most likely to access general practice and other health services?

Did you know...

Aboriginal people are more than twice as likely as non-Aboriginal people to die as a result of diabetes or from injuries.

NSW has 28% of Australia's total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island population

- How do you know / how have you established this information?
 - Hear say
 - We just know it from history
 - Because our GPs tell us
 - We regularly talk to our local land council representatives and are in touch with the Aboriginal Elders and key community members in our area who keep us informed of where the Aboriginal people attend for services.
 - We have surveyed our Aboriginal community to find out where they attend for general practice services

Action Area 2: How much do you know about the statistics for the uptake of MBS items for Aboriginal people in your Division and identification?

- Do you know the uptake of Aboriginal Health Checks undertaken in your Division (eg in the last quarter)?
 - Adult health checks (Item 710)
 - Child health checks (Item 708)
 - Older Persons Health Checks (Items 704 and 706)
- Are the practices in your Division routinely identifying and recording the cultural background of patients?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Some practices
- Is your Division actively promoting the importance of identification of Aboriginal patients to practices?
 - Yes
 - No
- Do you know where to record whether a patient is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in medical software?
 - Yes
 - No

Did you know...

145,000
Aboriginal
people reside
in NSW – they
equate for 2.2
% of the total
population of
NSW.

Approximately
60% of
Aboriginal
patients go to
a mainstream
general
practice for
health care
services.

Action Area 3: How well does your Division plan for and address the needs of the Aboriginal community?

- Does your Division do Welcome to Country / Acknowledgement of Country at each Division event?
 - Yes always
 - Usually – but depends who in the Division has organised the event
 - Only when the event has an Aboriginal focus
 - No never
 - Don't know what Welcome to Country is

- Do you have established partnerships with local Aboriginal groups (e.g. Land Council, Local Elders, AMS etc)?
 - Yes we have established partnerships and regularly consult with the local elders and a range of Aboriginal Groups in our community (AMS, Land Council, Elders, Aboriginal Community services, other Aboriginal organisations)
 - Sometimes – when we have a specific program that targets Aboriginal people
 - No – we have not got a strong history of partnership with our Aboriginal community, and would not really know who we should be talking to

- Does your Division regularly include planning for how programs rolled out through mainstream general practice will reach Aboriginal people? (diabetes prevention program, smoking cessation, chronic disease self management, mental health programs?)
 - Yes
 - No

- Can you give examples of where the Division has done this and how have you gone about this?

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Did you know...

Aboriginal people can expect to live 17 years less than other Australians

Aboriginal people have a higher risk of developing preventable chronic diseases and are one and half times more likely to be admitted to hospital than non-Aboriginal people

Action Area 4: Is your Division ready to employ Aboriginal people to undertake the Close the Gap initiative?

Close the Gap will require Divisions to employ Aboriginal people to undertake key roles including Indigenous Outreach Workers, Chronic Disease Care Coordination roles and others.

- Does your Division have an Aboriginal Employment Strategy in place?

Yes

No

- Has your Division deliberately sought to employ Aboriginal people within the workforce before?

Yes

No

- Where would you advertise for an Aboriginal person to join your staff?

Sydney Morning Herald

Telegraph

Koori mail

Local paper

Through the AMS and other newsletters from local Aboriginal Organisations

Through communication with our local Aboriginal community

When supporting an Aboriginal person at the Division...

- Does your Division's culture welcome and support diversity within the staff team?

Yes

No

Unsure

- Is there a training, mentoring and support program available at your Division for Aboriginal employees?

Yes

No

Does your Division have an Aboriginal Employment Strategy in place?

Go to www.grow.org.au and click on 'Indigenous Community Strategy' for some great resources to support you to successfully recruit and retain Aboriginal employees

So... Where to from here? We challenge you to make positive changes within your Division.....

Have you identified some areas for improvement in Aboriginal Health within your Divisions?

Some areas for change are bigger and more challenging than others, but every change you make is a step in the direction of improving your Divisions approach to Aboriginal Health.

Write down what changes you will take responsibility for when you get back to your Division. You may want to include a time frame for when this will be done and anyone else you may need to work with to achieve the change.

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