

Integrating an oral health wellness program into a nurse-led refugee health service

Key Words: Refugee, Prevention, Oral Health, Model of Care.

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We asked the question how long is the wait list

Introduction

- Refugees are eligible within the first 12 months of arrival in Queensland (Qld)
- Over 215 ethnicities, 26% born overseas
- Newly arrived people present with lack of trust and fear due to previous experience
- Poor oral health due to no previous access to care and periods of deprivation
- Social disadvantage due to resettlement, language barrier and poor health literacy
- Oral Health (OH) care impacts on overall health outcomes
- OH service capacity unable to meet local population growth

Objectives

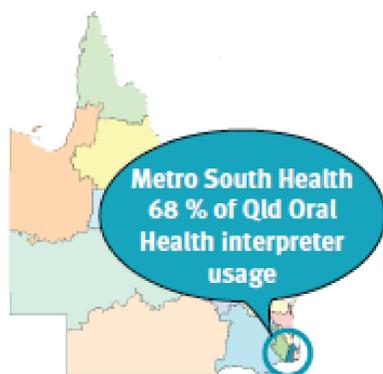
- Determine the wait list for newly arrived people
- Increase preventative OH care delivery
- Review cultural responsiveness of Oral Health Services (OHS)
- Explore alternative model of care to deliver timely care
- Interventions needed to be cost neutral

Methods

- Comprehensive review of the waiting list data
- Review of the interpreter usage
- Map there culturally safe existing health pathways
- Identification of key partners



In 2015 2yr wait list = 700 people



March 2016 wait list reduced to 28 days
1236 people assessed in 18 months

Initial outcomes

- Integrating OHS at the same time as the nursing health assessment
- Redesign of services: Oral Health Therapists deliver early assessment, triage, first line treatment and education
- Clinician-led innovation, building rapport and trust with key partners and communities
- Screening tool
- New South Wales Refugee Health Appointment Reminder Translation Tool
- Strengthened partner relationships and communities
- Program delivered with no additional costs

Big picture outcomes and conclusions

- Contributes to the development – Refugee Health and Wellbeing Policy Action Plan for Qld 2017-20
- Qld Oral Health Refugee Health Working Group
- Intersectoral collaboration working across Hospital and Health Services and 11 organisations
- Sharing of pathway, tools and resources at State and National levels
- Intersectoral knowledge of wait times and referral pathways
- Dental Fairs in partnership with the Tzu Chi Foundation
- Building cultural sensitivity in staff
- Resources developed – 8 languages that are culturally, linguistically and literary appropriate



References

<https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/oral-health/tips-to-care-for-your-teeth>

<https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/health-equity-and-access/refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

<https://www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/refugee/appointment/>