
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT**Responding to the needs of all Queenslanders - the refugee health and wellbeing journey**1st Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care, Brisbane, 06-08 Nov 2017Donata Maria Sackey¹, Vicky Jacobson¹, Nicole Gould², Paula Peterson¹, Caroline Nicholson¹, Leeanne Schmidt³, Meryl Jones¹

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Introduction: In response to the growing number of new refugees settling in Queensland and the well documented challenges this population experiences in accessing the right care, at the right time, in the right place, a coordinated partnership approach was initiated. This was supported by engaging key partners, including the refugee communities themselves, new integrated models of care, a Refugee Health Network Qld and a refugee health and wellbeing policy for Queensland. The paper will address the key elements of the partnership, lessons learned, outcomes of the collaboration and implications for transferability.

Policy Context and objectives: A lack of policy in refugee health was identified as a key barrier to improving access to care for this population. Language and cultural barriers, low health literacy, unfamiliarity with the Australian health system and access to health professionals with the experience in refugee health all contributed to the complexity. Over a three year period the Partnership Advisory Group (Qld) (PAG Q) comprising of Primary Health Networks, Hospital and Health Services, NGOs, General Practices, refugee background communities and Universities, worked towards developing new models of care and policy change. This culminated in the launch by the Minister for Health Hon Cameron Dick of the first 'Refugee Health and Wellbeing: A policy and action plan for Queensland 2017-2020' and the funding of the inaugural Refugee Health Network Qld. The action plan provides a platform for achieving better health outcomes through modifying usual practice to meet the needs of this population.

Targeted population: People from a refugee background, including asylum seekers, who settle in Queensland.

Highlights (innovation, impact and outcomes): Some of the many initiatives and outcomes of the PAG Q include;

- an innovative community engagement framework with the consistent input by the Refugee Health Advisory Group made up of 11 (G11) consultants from diverse refugee background;
- Refugee Health Connect (RHC), a care provider contact point for refugee health issues;

- the Refugee Health Network and website as the one point of reference for refugee health resources; and,

- Refugee Health Clinical leads.

The coordinated approach has assisted in raising awareness of the issues for people of refugee background and has been a vehicle for harnessing new health professionals, services and policy makers in this space.

Comments on transferability: The model including the partnership and community engagement frameworks have high transferability for all hard to reach population. Other integrated models of care across tertiary and primary sectors will be able to use some of the key findings to inform sustainability and engagement strategies.

Conclusions (comprising key findings, discussion and lessons learned): A coordinated partnership approach with all key stakeholders, including communities, is essential for informing good practice, developing and sustaining integrated models of care, and policy support reflective of the issues and needs of a hard to reach population.

Keywords: community engagement; partnerships; integrated care; refugees
