

7 September 2015

## MULTICULTURAL HEALTH WEEK

South Western Sydney Local Health District is raising awareness about patient and carer rights and responsibilities in accessing safe and high quality health care during Multicultural Health Week (7 – 13 September 2015).

District Multicultural Health Services Manager Balwinder Sidhu said the focus was on letting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) consumers including patients and carers know about their rights and responsibilities.

“Everyone shares a fundamental right to basic healthcare in Australia, but there may be patients who are at risk of not understanding their health care rights,” Ms Sidhu said.

“For those whose first language is not English, it can be more difficult to access and understand information.

“This is why we are encouraging multicultural consumers to participate in their health care journey by asking questions and commenting on their care,” she said.

Ms Sidhu said that all patients, including those from multicultural backgrounds, have the right to:

- Request an interpreter and receive information about their health care in their language.
- Ask questions about their operation or procedure before giving consent for treatment.
- Be fully informed about the services, treatment options and costs.
- Comment on their health care and ask questions. It is important to let the hospital/service know how things are going.

Patients also have a responsibility to tell their doctor about all the medicines they take, including prescription, over-the-counter and traditional medicines.

Ms Sidhu also said Multicultural Health Week provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of equitable access to health information and resources for all Australians – including those whose first language may not be English.

“Multicultural Health Week gives us an opportunity to draw attention to all of the resources available for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds,” she said.

Multicultural Health Week is a state-wide event, held every September to highlight the importance of language and culture in health services as well as providing an opportunity to raise health issues in multicultural communities.

Translated health information is available at [www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au).