Congratulations to Dorothy Hoddinott, winner of the 2014 Australian Human Rights Medal. Principal of Holroyd High School in Greystanes for the last 19 years, Dorothy was recognized for her lifelong passion for and commitment to education, particularly for disadvantaged and refugee students. She is a partner in the health assessment clinic at the Intensive English Centre located at Holroyd High run by NSW Refugee Health Service (RHS) nurses.

Promoting Healthy Outcomes for Refugees (PHOR) is a new not for profit non-government organisation that aims to improve the overall health and wellbeing of newly arrived refugees. PHOR aims to deliver evidenced based nutrition, health maintenance and health literacy programs, to refugee communities. For details contact the Chair, Marisa Salem at RHS.

Royal Australian College of Physicians’ new position statement on refugees and asylum seekers will be presented at the next NSW Refugee Health Improvement Network meeting by Dr Mitchell Smith (Director, RHS). Health issues raised in HCR’s forthcoming report on children held in immigration detention will also be reviewed. Service providers are welcome to attend. Tues 3 March, 9:30-12:00 at Anglicare Parramatta. Contact the Convenor for details.

A dialogue with disability services on issues for people with a refugee background is being held on 18th February. All disability services providers are welcome to attend. Contact Cathy Preston-Thomas at RHS for details.

Medicare eligibility for asylum seekers on bridging E visa (BVE) has been extended for another three years but BVE holders will need to re-enrol for Medicare at a Medicare Service Centre. An interim receipt will be given to the recipient and a new Medicare card will be mailed out within 2-3 weeks. RHS advises clients to re-enrol now, rather than waiting until they need medical help. The application form can be downloaded but must be presented in person at Medicare with an Immicard, unless the person is living in an area remote from a Centre or is otherwise incapacitated.

Health professional’s responses in hunger strikes: continued hunger strikes in Manus Island detention centre pose difficult ethical and legal issues for treating medical practitioners. Useful guidelines include the World Medical Association’s Declaration on Hunger Strikers (Declaration of Malta), and the AMA’s Position Statement. Discussion of the issues include: Legal and ethical implications of medically enforced feeding of detained asylum seekers on hunger strike (MJA), and Ethical Considerations in the Management of Asylum Seekers On Hunger Strike (JAMA).

Children with disabilities in immigration detention: the National Ethnic Disability Alliance is researching issues for children with disabilities (and their families) in detention. For more information contact the Research and Policy Officer on 02 6262 6867.

Change of onshore visa medicals provider: Bupa Medical Visas Services is now providing medicals for Australian visa applicants, not Medibank Health Solutions. For details contact Bupa, ph 1300 794 919.
Call for Abstracts for The Mental Health Services Conference 2015: formats include papers, symposia, workshops, debates, brief papers, e-Posters or roundtable discussions. TheMHS Conference 2015 (25 - 28 August 2015, Canberra).

Smoking Cessation groups are delivered periodically at RHS. If you have clients who are interested, they can register their details with Lidija Sestakova at RHS 8778 0770.

Cervical Cancer and Screening information session for the Karen community will be held 28th February, 10am-12 at the Auburn Diversity Services Inc. Guest speaker is Dr Christine K. Tan, GP, Campbell St Family Medical Practice. Organised by Auburn Diversity Services, Inc., Community MRC, Fairfield MRC, STARTTS, and RHS. Contact B-Ann Echevarria at RHS for details.

Refugee Women’s Health Network is meeting on 26 February at 10.30 at Family Planning Asso, Fairfield, 10am. RWHN is currently working on a Menopause DVD in Arabic, Dari and Hindi, a collaboration between RHS, Family Planning NSW, NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service and Women’s Health SWSLHD. Contact B-Ann Echevarria at RHS for details.

Women’s Health & Men’s Health information sessions for people from a refugee background. Sessions will focus on common health diseases and relevant local health services. To be held at Navitas Fairfield on the 6th and 13th of March, respectively, from 10-12. Organised by Navitas Fairfield and RHS. RSVPs essential. Contact B-Ann Echevarria at RHS for details.

Community Consultations on Medication are being held by the Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) on 9 February (2.30-4.00) and 10 February (11:00-12.30) at TMHC North Parramatta. Community members will be reimbursed. Contact Katrina Elias.

Congratulations to Dr Winston Lo for receiving UNSW Medicine’s Award for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning 2014. Winston is the GP at RHS’ Blacktown and Mt Druitt clinics, and frequently assists the many medical students on placement at RHS.

Iraqi Refugee Health Profile from the Centers for Disease Control (USA) contains priority health conditions, health care and nutrition in asylum, health information, and useful background information including cultural approaches to health care. Health issues of Syrian refugees in asylum are also available from WHO and MSF.

Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health’s new language service resources report details a number of practical examples of how to monitor and increase interpreter usage, and increase cultural competency.

Training materials for working with young people from refugee backgrounds have been developed based on the unit of competency in the Community Services Training Package: CHCYTH001: Engage respectfully with Young People. The training package would be relevant to youth health workers and others. Developed by MYAN, Navitas English, AMES Vic, MDA, and Margaret Piper.

Subscribe to the new Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service e-newsletter, Diversity News. Published twice-yearly, it highlights current issues in HIV, and hepatitis B and C culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Fairfield Refugee Nutrition Project’s presentation from the Food security conference has been posted on the Putting Food on the Table: Food Security is Everyone’s Business site: Eloise Le Compte, NSW Refugee Health Service. The Conference was held in October by The Right to Food Coalition and partners (including RHS).

Report on issues for people living with a disability from a CALD background: The issues and case studies in Diversitat’s Disability Findings Report are very relevant to refugee populations.
Multilingual Immunisation Talking Books from Networking Health Victoria provide pre and post-immunisation information in 22 languages including Burmese, Cambodian, Chin Techin, Chin Hakas, Dari, Farsi, Karen and others. Each book holds up to 10 languages. For details email Kate Russo.

Interventions for Physiotherapists Working with Torture Survivors provides practical guidelines for physiotherapists working with torture survivors, with special focus on chronic pain, PTSD, and sleep disturbances. Produced by Dignity, the Danish Institute Against Torture.

Anxiety and depression resources are available from beyondblue in Arabic, Dari and Chinese for people who are concerned about someone close to them experiencing depression or anxiety. Arabic and Dari booklets are available for parents and guardians and for young people who are worried about a friend.

The Family Referral Service is a state-wide service offering free, voluntary and integrated support to meet the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families by connecting them with relevant local services and community resources. UnitingCare Burnside provides FRS in South West Sydney: it is CALD focussed, and encourages referrals from emerging communities and refugees. For details contact 1300 244 826, e-mail, or see the website.

Family Planning NSW Talkline is a service available to clinicians, service providers and members of the public who are seeking expert advice on reproductive and sexual health. Clients are advised to ring TIS for an interpreter first, and ask them to connect to Talkline 1300 658 886.

Publications & research

A sample of published articles is below. Links to abstracts are provided where full texts are not available for free.


Persson G et al. (2014) Somali women’s view of physical activity—a focus group study, BMC Women’s Health, 14:129.


**Training and professional development**

**11-13 Feb 2015:** Migration, Social Disadvantage and Health Conference, Melbourne.

**3 Mar 2015:** NSW Refugee Health Improvement Network meeting. Special topics: RACP position statement on refugees and asylum seekers (guest speaker Dr Mitchell Smith, RHS Director), and the health issues raised in HCR’s forthcoming report on children held in immigration detention. Anglicare Parramatta, 9:30-12:00. RSVP the Convenor.

**6 Mar 2015:** Women’s Health information sessions for women from a refugee background, at Navitas Fairfield, 10-12. RSVPs essential. Contact B-Ann Echevarria.

**13 Mar 2015:** Men’s Health information sessions for men from a refugee background, at Navitas Fairfield, from 10-12. RSVPs essential. Contact B-Ann Echevarria for details.

**17 Mar 2015:** HIV CALD Forum with SWSLHD - “Ending HIV: No one left behind”. For details contact Lidya McGowan, ph 9828 5932.

**26 Feb 2015:** Refugee Women’s Health Network is meeting, 10.30am, Family Planning NSW, Fairfield. Contact B-Ann Echevarria for details.

**15 April 2015:** Health Literacy one-day intensive training, presented by Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health, Melbourne. See CEH for details or contact: Lynda Memery 03 9418 9930.

**4-6 June 2015:** North American Refugee Health Conference, Toronto.

**7 July 2015:** NSW Refugee Health Improvement Network. Special topic: the health of the Bhutanese community, needs and strategies of engagement, Anglicare Parramatta, 9:30-12:00. Contact the Convenor for details.

If you have a health-related refugee item for the next Refugee Health E-news please contact: NSW Refugee Health Service (02) 8778 0770 or Cathy.Preston-Thomas@sswahs.nsw.gov.au.

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