E-News

Refugee health news  November 2017

Volunteers Needed

RHS is currently recruiting volunteers to become a “Health Navigator”. Health Navigation Volunteers will assist and mentor newly arrived refugees, helping them to navigate the health care and transport systems. This will enable them to successfully attend their health appointments, in particular appointments at hospitals, with specialists, at dental clinics, women’s health centres and with other health practitioners. Further information can be found on the RHS website.

Humanitarian Arrivals Data

Summary of DSS Humanitarian arrival data for NSW for 2016/17 financial year:
- There was an increase from 3,324 arrivals in 2015/16 financial period to 11,240 in 2016/17 period.
- Main countries of origin: Iraq (49%), Syria (36%) and Afghanistan (3.5%)
- Main LGA settlement areas; Fairfield (53%), Liverpool (16%), Blacktown (5%), Parramatta (4%), Bankstown (3%)
- Visa sub-Classes; 202 (73%), 200 (22%), 204 (4%)

Accessing TIS to assist with NDIS

TIS National has partnered with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to provide interpreting services for NDIS participants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This service will support participants when connecting with registered service providers for funded supports in a participants plan. A fact sheet is available for downloading.

Asylum Seekers

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) “is calling for assurances that the health and wellbeing of asylum seekers on Manus Island is being protected amid conditions being described as ‘chaotic’ and ‘dangerous’, as detainees are being forced to move from the closing detention centre to alternative accommodation in the community”. The AMA also requests transparent reporting of the health and wellbeing and living conditions of the asylum seekers residing on Manus Island.
The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) continues to call for the release of all asylum seekers in mandatory detention.

**Reminder on fee waiver for Medicare ineligible**

Potential increase in Medicare-ineligible asylum seekers: many support services have been withdrawn from people transferred from offshore detention for medical reasons, and there is an expected increase of people losing services as their applications are processed. Unclear if latter group will keep Medicare but many are likely to have trouble purchasing medications. Services should familiarise themselves with PD2016_055 “Medicare Ineligible and Reciprocal Health Agreement - Classification and Charging”, in particular section 3.9 Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

**Refugee Nurses of Australia**

The Refugee Nurses of Australia (RNA) held their first National Forum on the 13th October in Liverpool NSW. Over 60 delegates from across Australia attended the Forum which was the first face to face meeting of the general membership since its launch in October 2016. The RNA aims to give a professional voice to nurses working in refugee health, as well as those with an interest in the health of refugees and of those seeking asylum. The RNA website www.refugeenursesaustralia.org was also launched.

**Oceans without Borders**

The second Oceans without Borders event was held at Manly in October, the first being in April this year (link to news story). This event introduces youth of refugee backgrounds to the Australian beach culture and that of water safety. Forty-eight students from Lurnea and Fairfield IEC participated last month, with many seeing the ocean for the first time. The event was organised by SSI with the assistance of RHS nurse Brett Hatfield. The next one will be held in December just prior to Christmas. The 25th December to 1st January period last year, saw 17 people drown in NSW alone; 29% of those were migrants.

**Refugee Symposium**

“Surviving to Thriving: Refugee Journeys - A Symposium by South Western Sydney Wellbeing Collaboration” was held in October in Liverpool, NSW. Over 230 people registered for the symposium. Keynote speakers focused on refugees as assets rather than a burden; this set the tone for the 14 workshops that followed. Feedback suggests attendees were inspired to take action and special interest groups were formed which included: Mental Health Literacy, Men’s Wellbeing, Community Safety & Connection, and Creativity. If you are interested and would like further information, or to join the SWS Wellbeing Collaboration, please email, subscribe directly, or access via Facebook.
Queensland Asylum Seeker Fee Waver

The Queensland Government has approved providing vulnerable Medicare-ineligible asylum seekers with access to public health services at no charge. The change reinstates arrangements that were originally introduced in Queensland in 2006. Queensland Health has produced an information sheet with further information.

Reminders

There are new and separate referral forms for:

- The Health Assessment for Refugee Kids (HARK) clinic at The Children’s Hospital at Westmead
- The Refugee Child Health Clinic at Sydney Children’s Hospital

New resources


Multicultural Diabetes Portal: The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) multicultural diabetes portal provides health professionals with a broad range of translated diabetes resources from credible providers including Diabetes Australia, Diabetes Australia state and territory agents, and non-government organisations. The resources available include factsheets and brochures which have expert advice about managing diabetes and living well in a wide variety of languages.

Training and professional development

22 Feb 2018: Core concepts in working with people from refugee backgrounds, one-day workshop, STARTTS; see website for RSVP, more dates and locations.

Publications & research

For published articles below; links to abstracts are provided where full texts are not available for free.


New Journal
University of Louisville inaugural issue of Journal of Refugee and Global Health http://ir.library.louisville.edu/rgh/vol1/iss1/

If you have a health-related refugee item for the next Refugee Health E-news please contact us:

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