Multilingual Health Information Stakeholders Forum
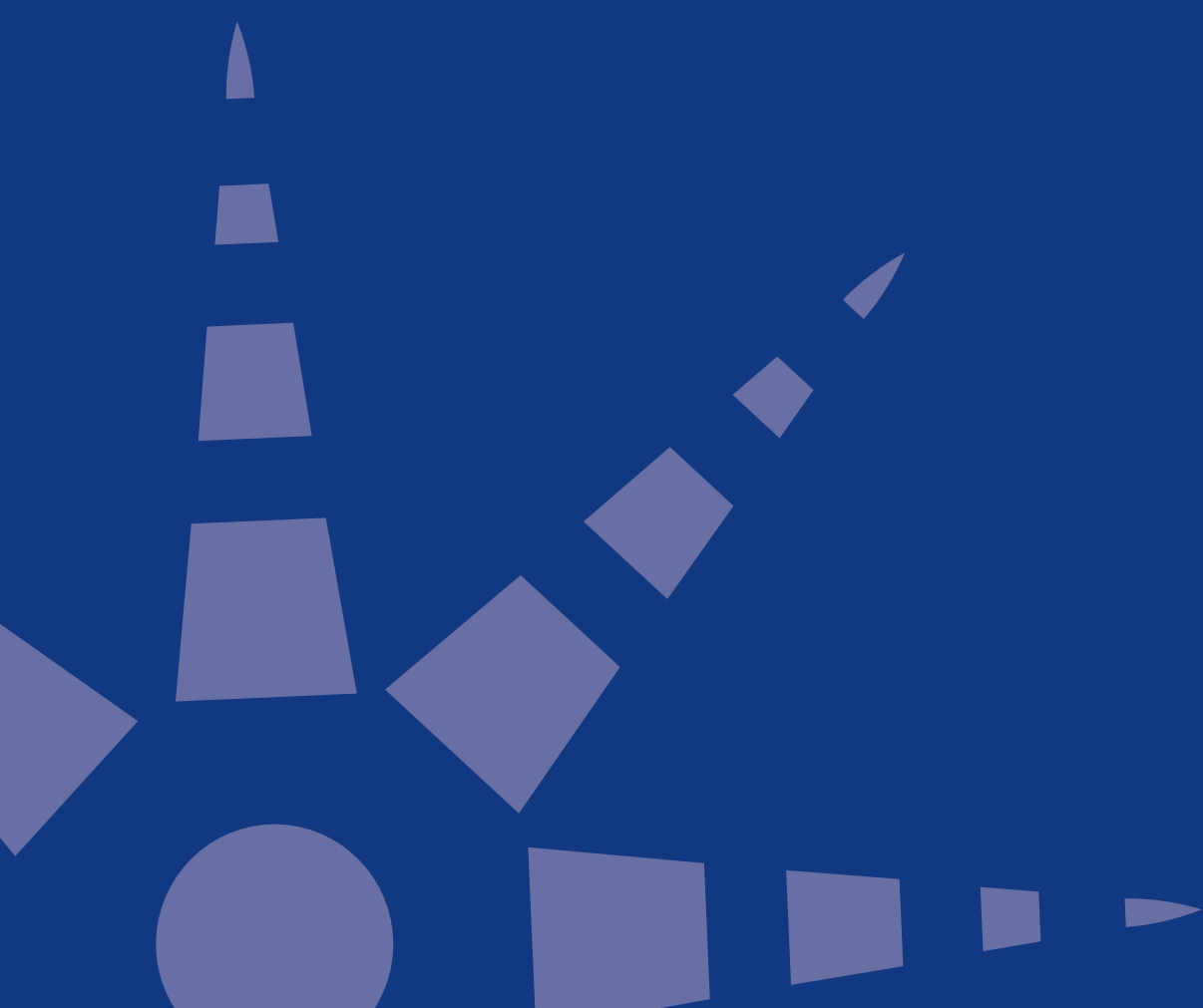
Production of multilingual health resources

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NSW GOVERNMENT Health

multicultural health communication

Forum 1: Guidelines for the production of multilingual health resources

The NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS) is a state-wide service funded by the NSW Ministry of Health to provide health information to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in NSW. It has over 500 publications in over 65 languages on its website (**www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au**).

Since its establishment in 1997, MHCS, has investigated good practice standards in the production and checking of multilingual health resources. Based on the current evidence and in consultation with its stakeholders, MHCS has developed guidelines for health staff producing multilingual health resources.

After a series of consultations with key stakeholders and based on the results of surveys from October to December 2013, MHCS has amended the document "Guidelines for health staff producing multilingual heath resources (Guidelines)"

For a copy of the Guidelines, visit: **http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au/services/translation/pdf/guidelines.pdf**

Why a forum on this topic?

MHCS updates all resources found on its website to ensure that the information provided is still current and the translated versions are accurate. It encourages organisations to share their resources on the MHCS website and requests that a person or position from that organisation be nominated to be responsible for future reviews of the publication.

Over the past few years, despite having Guidelines for the production of health resources, MHCS has noticed varying levels of quality of translations and understanding of what are the elements of good multilingual health resources.

This first forum aimed to seek further feedback on the contents of the Guidelines, the issues organisations face in adopting the suggested guidelines in the production of multilingual resources as well as bringing together various stakeholders who produce, commission, translate, check and research multilingual health resources.

Forum recommendations

The following were the major recommendations from the forum :

1. **Branding multilingual health resources and reducing duplication across NSW:** The Guidelines suggest that NSW funded resources as much as possible should be shared across NSW services. Despite this, forum participants reported that there are resources produced at the local health district level that could be used across NSW in other districts, but which are not shared. Other issues were: Which logos should be used? Local Health District logos? NSW Ministry of Health? The NSW Ministry of Health has an established protocol for the use of its logo and as such, cannot be used without permission.

   Action: MHCS, along with the Priorities Programs Unit of NSW Ministry of Health need to encourage ways of resources sharing at the local health district level, for example, meet with the Corporate Communications Unit of NSW Ministry of Health to investigate ways of encouraging resource sharing, for example, by having a the NSW Health logo in all resources while acknowledging the local health district who originally produced the resource.

2. **Updating the Guidelines for the production of multilingual health resources:** A range of recommendations were made to update the Guidelines.

   Action: MHCS to go through recommendations from the Forum and update the NSW Ministry of Health's Guidelines for the production of multilingual health resources. Once updated, MHCS to circulate to Forum participants. It was also recommended that the Guidelines be updated every two years.

3. **Demonstrating good practice in multilingual resources:** The Forum participants identified a need to have examples of translations that show elements of good practice – as described in the Guidelines.

   Action: MHCS to form a small working party to develop this resource. The resource can then be used along with the Guidelines.

4. MHCS and its role in promoting good practice in developing multilingual resources: One of the key recommendations for MHCS as a state-wide service is to have a more active role in promoting its services and programmes to health services, especially those that promote good practice in the development of multilingual health resources e.g. translations, guidelines, the bi-annual Multicultural Health Communication Awards and the availability of free multilingual health resources. There is also, however, a need to engage with or connect more closely with key/relevant multicultural/ communication contacts in LHDs to understand their needs, to tailor strategies and hence achieve improvements. Real change will happen through relationship building and influence, not just promotion.

- *Forum participants would like a web metrics reporting mechanism on MHCS website for resources. It would provide evidence that the produced resources are being used. Knowing which resources are downloaded when and by who would be useful for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the resource. Furthermore, presenting such data would help when applying for funding.*

Action: MHCS to incorporate the above recommendations in its business plan and increase promotional activities of its resources.

The way forward

The Multicultural Health Communication Service will collaborate with the NSW Ministry of Health, Local Health District Multicultural Health Directors and selected non-government organisations to consider and advance the recommendations from the Forum.

For further information on this Forum, please contact **Michael Camit, MHCS** on **9816 0305** or email **michael.camit@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au**

www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au
www.facebook.com/mhcsnsw

Multilingual Health Information Stakeholders Forum

An initiative by **multicultural health communication**

The purpose of the NSW Multilingual Health Information Stakeholders' Forum is to advise and support the Multicultural Health Communication Service to identify, develop and distribute high quality and priority multilingual health information in appropriate languages.