

Monday September 3, 2018

## **TALK, LISTEN AND ASK FOR BETTER HEALTH THIS MULTICULTURAL HEALTH WEEK**

The importance of communicating effectively with consumers from multicultural groups to ensure better health outcomes is being celebrated during Multicultural Health Week across the State this year.

Speaking at Liverpool Hospital today, NSW Health's Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant launched the 2018 Multicultural Health Week and said the theme this year was *Health Literacy - Talk, Listen, Ask – For Better Health*.

"With around 22 per cent of all consumers in the health system born in non-English speaking countries, the health literacy of this community is significantly lower than the general population," Dr Chant said.

"Health literacy is how people understand information about health and health care and how they apply that information to their lives.

"Of those with a first language other than English, approximately 75 per cent had below-adequate health literacy, compared to 54 per cent of people with English as a first language.

"Typically culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across NSW are also older and have a longer length of stay than other consumers.

"The role of our health workers assisting this population is more crucial than ever."

Acting Director for the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS), Michael Camit said the NSW Government has developed a new toolkit designed to help health workers support clients from CALD backgrounds.

"It contains information on assessing the need for an interpreter, risks around using friends and family members to interpret and the use of interpreters in health consultations," Mr Camit said.

"The toolkit covers tips on ways to improve readability of health information, preparing health resources for translations and improve signage for health services as well as advise on hospital tours for newly arrived migrants.

"In 2016, 31.5 per cent of people across NSW spoke a language other than English at home compared to 27.5 per cent in 2011.

"The population of NSW is continually evolving and this week is a great opportunity to celebrate our diversity and vibrancy."

For more information please go to: [www.multiculturalhealthweek.com](http://www.multiculturalhealthweek.com)