

PARTNERS IN CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CARE

Presenter: Ljubica Petrov

Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) is an initiative funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing under its Ethnic Aged Care Strategy.

PICAC has operated in all the states for the past five years.

The main premise of the initiative is that culturally and linguistically appropriate services can be achieved through close collaboration or partnerships between communities, aged care providers and the government.

PICAC offers a range of programs for **culturally and linguistically diverse communities**, these include:

- Information forums about the aged care sector
- Community needs analysis
- Facilitation of community input into service design and delivery
- Development of resources – which help communities navigate the aged care services
- As well as promoting to communities the full range of service options: ethnospecific, clustering and multicultural programs as well as generalist services

Over the past five years service **providers** have turned to PICAC for

- Information about specific community needs as well the range of service delivery models
- Resources
- Links with communities
- As well as training

The specific and main outcome of the PICAC work has been the development of partnerships between ethnic communities and service providers through ethnospecific, clustering and multicultural services. These partnerships are the outcomes of the work I just outlined. Through these partnerships specific communities are provided with a greater range of options through which culturally appropriate aged services can be accessed by their elderly members.

Today's summit is specifically looking at training initiatives: PICAC training initiative is based on detailed local knowledge of the aged care sector and is very closely interlinked with the over riding aim of facilitating partnerships and improving access.

Specifically the training that PICACs conduct includes:

- Cross cultural training initiatives at statewide, regional or service provider level
- Training specifically targeted at staff within facilities with key responsibility for aged care standard 3
- As well as training specifically targeting managers and proprietors of aged care services

Options in the format that this training might take range from short workshops, full day workshops, a series of training sessions, as well as an

accredited course. Some PICACs have also developed close collaboration with accredited aged care course providers. And currently *A Home for All*, a NSW initiative is being reworked under the Revised National Health and Community Services Training Package.

Ongoing support beyond the initial training program is provided through PICAC – Provider Network meetings at which participants set the agenda and further explore issues of cultural diversity as they relate to their services.

Diversity of choice and equitable access to quality aged care services is based on governments commitment and the provider readiness to provide culturally appropriate services. Training, even though a key feature on which provider readiness must be based can not be considered in isolation from the total number of initiatives which PICACs currently facilitate. Community consultations, input into the development of culturally inclusive policies, development of resources to name just a few.

WHERE TO?

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare by 2011 over 28 % of Australia's elderly population will be from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In Victoria that figure will be over 30%. With these statistics you would agree that we are not talking about a peripheral issue. Cultural Diversity must be seen as part of the core of the aged care sector. Over the coming years aged population will not be a uniform group of baby boomers but a group of people with over a hundred different ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds. (I am not including here the many indigenous communities whose needs too need to be addressed). I am hoping that over the next few years, with the support of

PICACs, policy makers, training providers and service providers will understand and accept that cultural diversity needs to be on their agenda not as a an add on but an integral part of their operations.