



Media Release

15 May 2017

Health consumer education focuses on multicultural communities

Community members and students of Katanning Senior High School from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background living in Katanning were given the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities in healthcare.

The information sessions were delivered by the Health Consumers Council in partnership with WA Country Health Services Great Southern Population Health.

WA Country Health Services Health Promotion Officer for CALD Karen Lipio said it is important for CALD community members to be able to understand and exercise their rights. "When everyone is informed and empowered, it reduces inequities. Hence, people should be supported to exercise those rights."

According to research, people from CALD background are often reluctant to ask health service providers, questions about their illnesses and treatment. This is due to cultural differences, lack of understanding about their rights and perceived misunderstandings. This leads to greater health disparities.

One of the important discussions during the session was the right to ask for an interpreter. The use of interpreters is part of the government's commitment in providing equitable access for everyone.

Louise Ford from the Health Consumer Council told the participants that Health Service providers within the public health system, as well as General Practitioners (GPs) and Pharmacist can provide interpreters through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) without a cost for clients with a Medicare card.

CALD community members were also encouraged to provide feedback, complains or suggestions to the Health Service. They were told this could done by completing the consumer feedback form available at hospitals, on the Health Department website or calling the Health Consumers Council hotline. They could also do this through their representatives on the Multicultural District Health Advisory Council (MDHAC).

The MDHAC, has recently been established by the WA Country Health Services, Great Southern Population Health, to serve as a conduit between communities and the health services. The Health Consumer Council also held a workshop for members of the MDHAC and the District Health Advisory Council (DHAC) to help them develop a greater understanding of their role and increase their confidence to be their community's representative.

Ms. Lipio added. "The plan is to continue to provide mentoring and support to consumer representatives so they can support their community and bring forward important feedback and opinions that can influence decision making"

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