



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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CELEBRATING MULTICULTURAL HEALTH WEEK

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today launched Multicultural Health Week in NSW by encouraging communities from culturally and linguistically diverse communities to participate in their own health care journey.

At a ceremony in Parliament House, Mrs Skinner said the theme in 2015 - *Rights and Responsibilities: Get involved in your health care* - is apt when 27% of NSW people speak a language other than English at home and 31% were born overseas.

“The NSW Government respects the right of every citizen to access healthcare services and information in their language or in a way they understand,” she said.

“Patients, clinicians, health care workers, health service organisations - each has an important role to play in contributing to safe and high quality care for all members of our diverse society.”

A new resource available this week is a DVD produced by the NSW Health Care Interpreter Services, which aims to educate health staff to risks, such as using patient’s family or friends to interpret. It advises that professional interpreters can significantly improve health outcomes and reduce the risk of harm to patients.

Posters and multilingual postcards have also been produced featuring key simple messages highlighting the rights and responsibilities most relevant to patients from multicultural communities. Print advertisements with the same messages in Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese and Tamil will appear in major ethnic papers.

To reach more emerging communities, a short video about patient rights and responsibilities has been produced in Arabic, Korean and English for the use of all health services, as well as medical surgeries.

Minister for Multiculturalism John Ajaka said Multicultural Health Week distills vital messages to communities across the state.

“In NSW there are cultures from more than 225 birth places, with more than 200 languages spoken. The messages communicated this week are vital to the health and wellbeing of our diverse society,” Mr Ajaka said.

During today’s ceremony, Mrs Skinner presented the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Awards to individuals and organisations which produce quality resources to assist multicultural communities to more easily access health services.

Resources produced by winners and finalists will be available on the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service website - www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au

For more information on Multicultural Health Week, go to www.multiculturalhealthweek.com.