Development of the ‘Natural Helper’ Model of Service Delivery in Collaboration with Industry Partners to Promote Health in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities

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Introduction CALD communities experience significant health disparities and lack access to services. Our project responded to the call for culturally appropriate methods of improving access to health services and, therefore, health outcomes, for CALD communities in the Logan-Beaudesert region. Focusing on sustainability and capacity-building, we planned to develop an evidence-based culturally appropriate model.

Approach and Findings Using action research and in collaboration with industry partners, we explored the issues, experiences and cultural interpretations of disability, chronic diseases, and health services in CALD communities. Data was collected via a systematic review of the literature, questionnaire, and focus group interviews with CALD communities and service providers at MultiLink and Access Inc. From the findings we developed the ‘Natural Helper’ model.

Conclusion The ‘Natural Helper’ model, which uses champions from the community, can translate into better health outcomes via (1) improved communication, (2) increased trust in the health system, (3) greater knowledge about services and (4) cultural understanding by service providers.

Future Directions We will be implementing the ‘Natural Helper’ model shortly. Funding for the implementation has been provided by the Logan-Beaudesert Coalition Board. A tool is being developed to evaluate the model in terms of dose, fidelity and sustainability.

Opportunities for Collaboration in Health This project has given us the opportunity to collaborate with the Refugee and Primary Health Project funded by Queensland Health at Mater UQ Centre. Through this collaboration our model can be integrated into the current health service system and become a sustainable approach to future CALD health.