

Advancing Cultural Competency

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The Department is committed to developing its capacity for providing culturally and linguistically competent health care services that are community-based and consumer-guided. San Francisco's increasingly diverse ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic populations have been a driving force in the Department's recognition and acknowledgment that services must be culturally and linguistically competent to be effective.

Last year the Department introduced a streamlined process for our community partners to report their advancements in cultural and linguistic competency. Instead of submitting a full narrative report, the agency and their respective program managers and analysts negotiated and identified three opportunities for improvement in the area of cultural and linguistic competency. The report then provides the rationale regarding why these opportunities were selected and the desired measurable outcomes.

The Cultural Competency Task Force conducted an on-line survey for contractors and DPH program managers after implementing this new process. Eighty percent of responding contractors and 90 percent of responding program managers liked the new format. We expect that the new process will be less burdensome to contractors while proactively advancing cultural and linguistic competency.

AIDS Office Pride Photo



The Department has also made a number of internal cultural competency advancements. Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center (LHH) embarked upon a comprehensive organization-wide diversity and inclusion effort entitled the “Culturally Effective Healthcare Program Development” project, which has become an integral part of the DPH Cultural Competency Task Force Strategic Plan.



The LHH program has built in sustainability and outcome tracking and it meets the California Endowment Foundation’s stringent criteria for reducing health disparities. While the grant-funded portion of the program is still in the initial “kick-off” year, early outcomes include participant buy-in and support for organization-wide policy, job description, residents’ rights and performance appraisal changes that reflect a value for diversity and establish an expectation for inclusion.

The Community Health Promotion and Prevention (CHPP) Branch provided training for DPH Program Managers and Contractors in development of the Cultural and Linguistic Competency Reports and Plans. “Goals and Objectives for Cultural Competency” is now offered as a regular training event through CHPP's Health Education Training Center.

Additionally, a four-hour intensive workshop entitled, "Understanding the Impact of Race and Racism on Health and Health Disparities" is offered to DPH managers, supervisors and other

health leaders. This workshop is meant to show how racism is institutionalized in many American systems and to understand the impact of such institutionalization. In the workshop, participants are encouraged to look at their roles within the workplace and identify how they can root out interpersonal and institutionalized racism, and provide an environment in which race and racism does not adversely impact the quality of care and patient outcomes.



Housing and Urban Health (HUH) formed a work group consisting of staff representing each of the work sites: Administrative Office (e.g., Program Managers, Budget Manager, etc.), HUH Clinic, Medical Respite, Action Point, Windsor Hotel.

The work group created and administered cultural awareness surveys to three groups:

1. HUH staff
2. Clients served at the Clinic, the Windsor and the Respite sites; and,
3. Agencies who contract w/HUH.

The surveys were designed to assess the awareness and sensitivity of HUH staff in serving clients and contractors, and to measure staff's strengths, challenges, consciousness and training needs in this area. The client survey results are being analyzed, and the results will be used to inform future development of HUH's clinical and administrative approaches, where appropriate.

The work group is also planning a day-long staff training retreat focusing on cultural awareness and diversity. This day will lay the foundation for ongoing opportunities to discuss and strengthen cultural awareness in the section.

990 Polk Street

A series of discussions with community-based organizations which contract with HUH is planned for the spring. These discussions will focus on how HUH can provide more culturally relevant services to contractors, and how HUH can provide technical assistance to contractors, assisting them to increase the cultural competency of their services and service delivery.

Another highlight is Nutrition Services' The Feeling Good Project, which provided interviews and health information to a number of news sources in the past year. These included:

- the New York Times on the impact on high food costs on food purchasing habits;
- Univision TV - Channel 14 on the importance of omega-3 fats for pregnant women;
- CDC data regarding increasing rates of adult obesity in the United States;
- a morning show on Childhood Obesity focused on what parents can do;
- KTVU - Channel 2 on the ordinance to promote voluntary Trans Fat Free designations in San Francisco Food Establishments;
- KPIX - Channel 5 on the benefits, both financial and culinary, of shopping in ethnic food markets; and,
- Childhood Matters-Nuestros Niños on how to promote healthy nutrition for children. This outreach reached over 2.5 million readers and viewers of these news sources.



Nutrition Services, through the Feeling Good Project, also worked collaboratively with the San Francisco Unified School District Nutrition Education Project to produce trilingual nutrition education brochures in English, Spanish and Chinese. They have continued to work closely with dozens of community partners to provide technical assistance, nutrition education materials and train-the-trainer Cooking Classes and Nutrition Education Classes. Through these education efforts, they have helped to build capacity in community-based organizations to ensure that nutrition education is available to low-income San Francisco residents.



Breastfeeding – It's Your Right

All nutrition and breastfeeding group classes have been redesigned to include recommendations on physical activity and wellness for participants. All WIC staff use motivational interviewing techniques to conduct individual counseling to encourage participants to make their own behavioral changes to improve their health and nutrition.

The Food Security Task Force was also created to address hunger in San Francisco and increase utilization of federal nutrition programs. It is comprised of representatives from City service organizations, local and federal government, with Nutrition Services staff on the Food Security

Task Force and the Director of Nutrition Services as a member of the Task Force representing the Department of Public Health WIC Program.



In 2007, the STD Section held a cultural competency retreat. The STD Clinic was closed and all staff spent the day off-site discussing issues related to cultural competency with the goal of improving relationships with patients as well as with other staff. The retreat was facilitated by an outside staff person with considerable expertise in this field and was prefaced by months of needs assessment and data collection. The facilitator summarized the findings of the Retreat as well as commitments to advancing cultural competency in areas of client services and personnel.

SFGH expanded the Video Medical Interpretation (VMI) Project (Video and Polycom phones) to the following areas this past fiscal year: 4M - July / 07, this includes Neurology/Neurosurgery, ENT, Ophthalmology, Optometry; 5M - Women's Health Clinic; and 5C - Inpatient. In addition, Interpreter Services also spread interpreter access via polycom speaker phones to SFGH's first inpatient unit. This was very important as interpreters are not available in the very early mornings during rounds and after midnight when patients may require language assistance. Language services are provided to this inpatient unit in-person when required during the hours that interpreters are onsite (8AM to 12 Midnight), and after-hours (and for languages not provided by interpreter services) by our telephonic agency which is available 24/7. SFGH Interpreter Services will continue to spread this service to the following Units: Emergency Department, inpatient units, PACU and Surgi Center, and the remainder of the M suite clinics - 3M Surgical clinics, and 6M Pediatric Clinic.

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