

Position Statement – Indigenous Health (E001)

Background

In the General Practice Strategy Review (March 1998), the need to increase the capacity of General Practice to improve Indigenous health status was recognised as a priority. The role of General Practice was not extensively considered in the National Aboriginal Health Strategy, which has directed Indigenous health care policy for a decade. However, in the Strategy Review it was stated that any proposed model for General Practitioners working in Indigenous Health should be consistent with the principles underlying the strategy. These include acceptance of Indigenous people's holistic views of health, recognition of the importance of local Indigenous community control and participation, and intersectoral collaboration.

It was recognised that new, more sustainable models of service delivery need to be explored to provide support to General Practitioners working in Indigenous health settings.

Currently, Indigenous Australians access health care in Queensland through community controlled services, State funded health services and, to a lesser extent, through private fee for service by General Practice¹, however regional variations in access exist throughout the state. The General Practice Strategy Review identified that a number of Indigenous Australians access care through mainstream General Practice either through choice or because of lack of availability of specific purpose health services, and therefore mainstream General Practitioners should be supported in their provision of appropriate care to Indigenous Australians.

General Practice Queensland Role

Queensland Divisions of General Practice Association Inc. (General Practice Queensland) is the state-wide representative organisation of the 19 autonomous member Divisions representing General Practitioners in Queensland. From its inception General Practice Queensland has identified Indigenous Health as an important component of each of its program areas.

General Practice Queensland's role in Indigenous health includes the following:

- establishing relationships with relevant organisations at a State level
- providing information and resources to Divisions to facilitate a better understanding of Indigenous health issues
- assisting Divisions facilitate General Practitioners' access to and involvement in cross-cultural training
- assisting Divisions to work collaboratively at the local level with Community Controlled Health Services
- assisting Divisions to explore new sustainable models of health service delivery to Indigenous Australians
- facilitating Divisions' work to assist their members provide quality of care for Indigenous peoples seeking General Practice services
- participating collaboratively at State and National levels to address structural problems that limit General Practice's capacity to provide primary care to Indigenous Australians
- participating collaboratively at State and National levels to increase Indigenous Australians' ability to access quality health care.

¹ Commonwealth Department of Health & Aged Care (1998), *General Practice: Changing the Future Through Partnerships, Report of the General Practice Strategy Review Group*, Canberra: March 1998.

Position Statement

General Practice Queensland recognises the importance of Community Controlled Health Services in the delivery of health care to Indigenous peoples.

General Practice Queensland acknowledges the role that Indigenous Health Workers play in the delivery of health care.

General Practice Queensland recognises the need for appropriate consultation in working with Indigenous peoples.

General Practice Queensland recognises the holistic view of health of Indigenous communities.

General Practice Queensland recognises the rights of Indigenous Australians to self-determination in health care.

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