



Abstract Title: Building partnerships toward equitable refugee healthcare

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Introduction/Background

The Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) is the largest immigrant serving agency in Atlantic Canada with over thirty-five years of experience serving immigrants in Nova Scotia.

In 2016/2017 ISANS supported 4,972 immigrants to build a future in Nova Scotia, 1,429 of those were government assisted refugees – convention refugees abroad whose initial resettlement in Canada is supported by Government of Canada or Quebec.

Refugee health support at ISANS strives to offer services that address health disparity among newcomer refugees.

Purpose

ISANS Refugee Health Program aim to address systemic and socially produced health disparities and build pathways to achieve health equity for refugee population. Two main components of Program are: support to clients (government assisted refugees) in accessing information and services important to their health and wellbeing; support and educate service providers and advocate for sensitive, inclusive and responsive service to newcomers.

Presentation will provide insight in ISANS experiences with creating sustainable partnerships with service providers and immigrant communities.

Approach or Action

This Program recognizes that people's health and wellbeing are affected by all social determinants of health and strives to approach issues in a holistic way.

Throughout partnerships with agencies such as that of the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the IWK Health Centre, and various health and wellness groups in HRM, care plans have been developed and implemented to support client journeys towards health and wellbeing. By doing so, the partnerships created support equitable access to health care, addresses social determinants of health, and facilitates diversity and inclusion. This presentation will focus on the ways in which the agency has been involved in

advocacy efforts to address areas such as access to primary health care, oral health, wellness support, and support services for persons living with disability.

Outcomes

How to:

- Build strong and effective referral processes.
- Raise awareness of issues affecting health of government assisted refugees.
- Establish partnerships and work with service providers and developing consistent and sustainable services for immigrant population.

Conclusion

ISANS Health Program's approach, to build momentum for change on service providers level, is in creating partnerships as an actionable and manageable initiatives to build key pathways that will make difference for refugee population in health care access. Additionally, such partnerships raise awareness and knowledge of refugee health care with service providers.

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