Victorian Refugee Health Network Primary Care Project: 
A survey for general practice facilitators

Engaging and supporting general practice in refugee health: 
Background

People from refugee backgrounds, including those seeking asylum, have specific and often complex health, welfare and language service needs. General practice is crucial to the provision of on arrival health assessment and ongoing care and there are many general practices in Victoria that have developed significant expertise in refugee health care, including clinical skills and organisational capacity. General practices are part of a broader network of services including refugee health nurses and other practitioners in community health, specialist refugee health services, torture and trauma counselling services, refugee health fellows and Medicare Locals.

The Victorian Refugee Health Network (the Network) Primary Care Project aims to increase the number of general practices who are able, willing and confident to work with people from refugee backgrounds, including asylum seekers.

Refugee Health General Practice Engagement Tool

Preliminary stakeholder consultation and scoping of the academic literature has been undertaken in order to better understand strategies that work in engaging general practice in practice based change, to improve healthcare for people from refugee backgrounds.

The Network Primary Care Project team have begun to conceptualise and develop a General Practice Engagement Tool (working title). The tool will provide guidance for a structured interview between practices and ‘general practice facilitators’ to determine the needs of the general practice in order to deliver accessible and appropriate health care to people from refugee backgrounds. General practice facilitators are identified as those with a capacity building role in refugee health, and may include Refugee Health Nurses, Refugee Health Fellows, GP liaison workers or allied health.

In order to ensure that good quality refugee healthcare is delivered and to provide guidance for practice facilitators, the tool will outline a framework for improvement, including core/baseline measures and measures for continuing development. The tool will inform the development, implementation and evaluation of an action plan for practice based changes to improve health care for people from refugee backgrounds.

The tool will utilise a whole of practice approach and will therefore identify both clinical and non-clinical aspects of general practice service delivery that impact on the accessibility and appropriateness for people from refugee backgrounds. broader organisational systems and processes will be included in the tool in order to embed practice changes that support better health care for people from refugee backgrounds beyond the life of the project.

Purpose of survey

This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes and seeks to understand how general practice engagement is conducted in the sector and to identify existing tools or guides that are used to support this work. The survey will also inform the framework for improvement and the ongoing development and implementation of the General Practice Refugee Health Engagement tool. Completion of this survey will assist in ensuring that the General Practice Engagement Tool it is a valuable and transferrable resource for a range of practice facilitators including Refugee Health Nurses, Primary Health Networks and others engaged in general practice capacity building.

Who will be surveyed?

General practice facilitators in refugee health have been identified as those with a general practice capacity building role such as Refugee Health Nurses, Medicare Locals, Refugee Health Fellows, GP liaison. If you would prefer to participate in an interview to participate in this project, then please contact Samantha Furneaux at furneauxs@foundationhouse.org.au or 03 9389 8915.

1 Victorian Auditor-General’s Report, 2014, Access to services for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
2 General Practices includes general practitioners, practice nurses, practice managers, allied health professionals and administrative staff.
3 Department of Health (DoH), 2014, The Victorian refugee and asylum seeker health action plan 2014 – 2018, State of Victoria, Department of Health