

Cook Islands Health and Disability Workforce Development Initiatives An Update

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Introduction

- Cook Islands Health Network Association (NZ) Inc. formed in 1997 and formerly incorporated in 2001
- National informal membership of over a hundred from diverse backgrounds
- Vision – “building people and health communities through active partnerships”

Purpose

- To increase and strengthen the Cook Islands health and disability workforce in NZ
- Provide a platform for national debate, discussion and solution seeking on health issues concerning Cook Islanders in NZ
- Actively promote partnerships, collaboration among community groups, providers, organisations across sectors

Background (why is this work important?)

- Emerging pattern of ethnic differences regarding Pacific health

Some health stats...

- Cook Islands Maori are 29% more likely to experience any mental disorder compared with 24% for Samoan, 19% for Tongan (Te Rau Hinengaro, 2006)

Background...*cont'd*

- CI adult females high smoking prevalence and more likely to smoke than their male counterparts
- Young CI females more likely to take up smoking and drinking
- Higher prevalence of hypertension among CI adult males compared with Samoan (Novak, 2007)
- CI youth more likely to engage in risky alcohol drinking behaviour (Schaaf & Scragg, 2001)
- CI'ers have lowest life expectancy compared with others (NZHIS, 2003-2005)

Background...*cont'd*

- CI population second largest Pacific group, is young, fast-growing, ethnically & culturally diverse; less likely to have a high school/tertiary education; speak their language; belong to a formal religion (NZ Census, 2006)
- Not enough CI'ers in the health & disability sector
- Question – are current strategies working for Cook Islands people? Is ethnic-specific the way to go?

Key achievements to date (2005-present)

Key areas – infrastructure, membership activities and workforce development

- Dedicated office
- Appointed project manager
- Held 5 national uipa'angas nationally
- Increased our (paid) membership by over 500% (from 6 to 33) and growing!

Achievements to date...*cont'd*

- Established partnership with MSD, TCDT and SKIP (in process of developing MoU)
- Hosted our first Turama Conference last year

Findings...

- Cook Islands language, culture and models of care is essential in health as well as workforce development
- Need to establish a Cook Islands health service
- Cook Islands communities, services need to work together (inter-sectoral collaboration)
- Cook Islands youth is important
- We need to celebrate and acknowledge Cook Islands leadership and achievement

Looking ahead...

- Turama '08 in June (includes a CI Youth Programme)
- Develop Cook Islands national health youth strategy (with a focus on attracting more youth into the health & disability sector)
- Consultation and development of MoU with SKIP & MSD
- CI Models of Care project and other research initiatives projects (ongoing)

Looking ahead...

- Explorative work looking at ways to encourage collaboration among CI providers (across sectors)
- Continue to work on strengthening our infrastructure and obligations to our partners, membership and the community

Some learnings...

- KEY - Capacity and capability remains a challenge
- Self-awareness and over-commitment
- Staying focused and remaining within our organisational objectives
- Effective business and financial management systems
- Community relationships, cultural protocols

Conclusion

- Cook Islands culture, language and models of care is important for health care. More Cook Islanders are needed in the health and disability sector.
- Multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches (with education, social development etc) are more likely to work)
- Need to engage with youth, encourage youth participation

Questions?

- Contact details

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Meitaki ma'ata!!

- See you at TURAMA '08 June 12 & 13 here at Waipuna!
- 28 March 2008 – SKIP Consultation with Community leaders
- Visit www.cihna.org.nz for more info