

# Translating policy into better patient care

## The Northern Health TALS Model

**ims**  
Interpreter  
Management  
System



**Emiliano Zucchi**

Director – Transcultural & Language Services | Aboriginal Support Unit

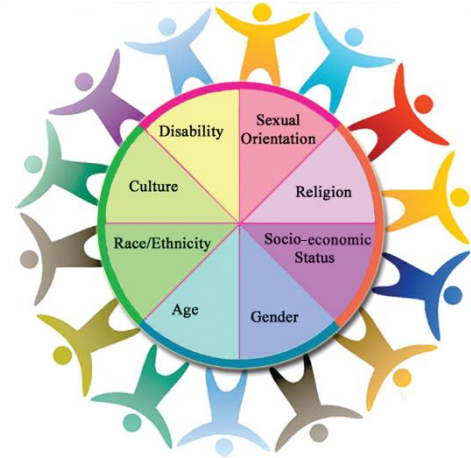
[Emiliano.Zucchi@nh.org.au](mailto:Emiliano.Zucchi@nh.org.au) m. 0409 405 257

**Northern Health**

## Australia's diversity.

### What minority?

- It's who we are
- Cultural Diversity
- English proficiency vs  
limited English proficiency



## Frameworks & Government Policy

- Federal
- State
- Health Service



## The situation @ Northern Health in 2007/2008

Factor	2007/2008
Patients born in NES countries	43%
Overall % of interpreter mediated OOS	7%
Interpreter Requests	17, 000
TALS EFTs	5
Request covered in-house	29%
Assignments per interpreter per day	5 (3 in 2007)
LOS difference between ES and NES patients	2.7 days (3 days in 2007)
Transcultural training sessions	35 (12 in 2007)
Number of translated documents	15
Unit cost for interpreting oos: in-house vs agency	Agency \$15 cheaper

## What was done @ Northern Health: TALS

- Centralisation & Standardisation
- Policies
- Employment Strategies
- Online booking system



## ...what was done at Northern Health: TALS

### Key Strategic Areas

**Strategic Area 1** TALS Policies / NH Cultural Responsiveness Plan / Accreditation

**Strategic Area 2** TALS Staff (PDs & Employment strategies, Supervision & PA, PD)

**Strategic Area 3** TALS Education & Research

**Strategic Area 4** Interpreter demand

**Strategic Area 5** TALS Portals (Translations Waiting List & Database, Intranet & Internet)

## Results

Factor	2018/2019	2017/2018	2007/2008
Total patient oos		335, 637	-
N. & % oos born in NES countries		157, 541 (47%)	-
Overall % interpreter mediated oos		20.50%	7% (estimate)
TALS EFTs		30.1	5
Requests & Growth		68, 745 (+16.5)	17, 000
Covered in-house		42, 036 (67%)	4, 942(29%)
Covered externally		20, 301 (33%)	12, 058 (71%)
Interpr assignments p/d: Acu&Sub		8.5	5
Number of telephone oos (external)		3579 (5%)	-
Number of video oos		8	na
LOS of all patients (in days)		2.74	6.4
LOS of ES patients		2.58	6.1
LOS of patients with LEP		3.42	8.8
LOS gap: ES vs LEP patients		0.8	2.7
% Unplanned readmission ES		9.90%	7.50%
% Unplanned readmission LEP		4.00%	9.30%
Difference btwn LEP & ES		-5.90%	1.80%
TALS Training sessions + staff n.		89 (1347)	35 (na)
On-line TALS training sessions		0	na
N. translated documents & words		25 (68, 865)	15 (55,554)
Student Placements		37	0
Interpreting oos: in-house vs agency			Agency +\$15

## Challenges & Opportunities

- Standard of interpreting services
- Succession planning
- Technology: Video-interpreting

