



Diversity in Health
Strengths and Sustainable Solutions
10 –12 March 2008

Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre
Darling Harbour, Sydney

NEWS RELEASE

**African pregnancy DVD –
Free copy now available!**

Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, Chair, Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, launched a new antenatal DVD specifically designed for African communities living in NSW at the Diversity In Health 2008: Strengths and Sustainable Solutions Conference, which was held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

A DVD in Somali, Dinka and Arabic was developed to inform and encourage women to present early for antenatal care and make full use of services offered by antenatal clinics. This resource aims to improve antenatal health and subsequent birth outcomes of women and their babies from small and emerging African communities.

In recent years, an increasing number of small and emerging communities from Africa have settled in Sydney West. Refugee women from these communities have been identified as having specific needs in regard to maternity and women's health services in particular. Many are not aware of antenatal care and how important it is in contributing to better health for mothers, their babies and the family as a whole.

The World Health Organisation recommends that pregnant women in developing countries should seek antenatal care within the first four months of pregnancy so that pregnancy complications can be detected and treated promptly.

"There are many possible reasons for late entry to antenatal care for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds who come from developing countries such as language barriers, low literacy levels, fear of government services, lack of awareness of the existence and value of antenatal care," said Clarissa Mulas, Network Director, Sydney West Area Health Service (SWAHS) Multicultural Health Network / Deputy Director Diversity Health Institute.

"Through consultations with newly arrived women in the Auburn region it was confirmed that refugee women were not accessing antenatal care for these same reasons," she continued.

"The DVD is designed for use with groups, at home with friends and family or at community centres such as Migrant Resource or Language centres or anywhere members of African communities are gathered and /or are accessing settlement services. Health professionals may find it useful in generating discussion about cultural differences and how they can impact on health," she said.

This was a collaborative project of SWAHS, NSW Refugee Health Service, Multicultural Health Communications Service, Auburn and Blacktown Migrant Resource Centres and South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Service.

~ Ends ~

For further information or a free copy of the DVD, please contact:

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About the Diversity In Health 2008 Conference

The Diversity in Health 2008: Strengths and Sustainable Solutions Conference will be the major event in diversity health in Australia for 2008. More than 1,000 national and international health experts are expected to attend the three-day international conference to address the health needs of Australia's diverse communities.

National and international health experts will present, debate and discuss challenges, strengths and sustainable solutions for Australia's diverse community groups at the fourth Diversity in Health 2008 Conference at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour from 10 to 12 March 2008.