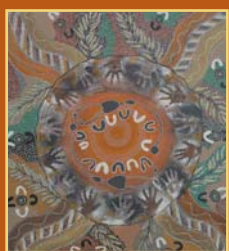


Memorandum of Understanding between NACCHO and ADGP

2003





“The Circle of Friendship”

The story of the “Circle of Friendship” is represented in the outer circle by the black and white hands-of-friendship with the inner circle representing black and white sitting down, talking, working and learning from each other. The specific emphasis that the talking and working is mainly with doctors is encapsulated in the symbolic stethoscopes.

Artist: Dale Huddleston | Ngandi/Wiradjuri

Memorandum of Understanding

Background

The improvement of the health status of Aboriginal communities is a priority at all levels of the health system.

The Aboriginal concept and perception of health is defined as follows:

“Aboriginal health means not just the physical well being of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural well being of the whole Community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being thereby bringing about the total well-being of their Community. It is a whole of life view and includes the cyclical concept of life - death – life.”

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) represents over 100 Aboriginal community controlled health services in every State and Territory across Australia. Aboriginal community controlled health services are primary health care services initiated, planned and managed by local Aboriginal communities which deliver high quality, holistic, and culturally appropriate health care.

Established in 1974, NACCHO was initially known as the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation, with the name change occurring in 1993. NACCHO became an incorporated body and established the National Secretariat in Canberra in 1997.



NACCHO is the peak national body in Aboriginal health. Its primary role is to:

- advocate for increased resourcing in Aboriginal health, to a level commensurate with need;
- advocate for the effectiveness and cultural validity of national policies, programs and initiatives in Aboriginal health; and
- facilitate capacity building in Aboriginal communities.

The Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) is a national Canberra based organisation established in 1998 to support and represent 120 Divisions of General Practice throughout Australia.

ADGP's mission is to provide leadership and support for the Divisions of General Practice Network to achieve quality and vitality in primary health care.

At the State and Territory level, the role of the Divisions of General Practice is to support general practitioners working across the spectrum in primary health care, and to support the primary health care team.

This Memorandum has been developed by NACCHO and ADGP to provide the framework for these two organisations to work together, and to support the Divisions of General Practice, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) and Aboriginal communities to work together to provide quality, sustainable primary health care.

Partnership

ADGP recognises NACCHO as the national peak, representative organisation that co-ordinates advice, policy and direction on Aboriginal health issues in Australia.

NACCHO recognises ADGP as the organisation that represents Divisions of General Practice at the national level.

ADGP recognises and will work within the spirit of Aboriginal self-determination and community control.

The partnership between NACCHO and ADGP provides an opportunity for each organisation to learn from the other, and to support their members to deliver high quality, culturally appropriate primary health care to the community.



Principles

This agreement is based on recognition of the following principles:

- Aboriginal health is a national priority.
 - Improved health outcomes for Aboriginal people will only be achieved when Aboriginal people and their community controlled health services are empowered to act on their own behalf and when adequate resources are available for both services and infrastructure. This also includes access to and utilisation of mainstream health resources.
 - Aboriginal peoples have a fundamental right of ownership over their own knowledge and information.
 - Improved health will primarily result from:
 - decisions about priorities and strategies being determined at the local level; and
 - local Aboriginal community health plans developed through the statewide planning process facilitated by NACCHO State/Territory affiliates. This is complemented by framework agreements that provide transparency and clarity within the health system.
 - These local health plans may inform Divisions of General Practice needs assessments and strategic planning processes. A long term goal is to support the active involvement of Divisions of General Practice in developing these local health plans.
- NACCHO and ADGP will work in partnership to develop programs concerned with Aboriginal health issues.
 - NACCHO and its member affiliates recognise that the primary role of Divisions is to support General Practice to deliver quality, sustainable primary care and improve health outcomes for the whole Australian community.
 - Community development and capacity building is an important element of Divisional engagement in Aboriginal health. This requires adequate resources to:
 - facilitate the maximum input from ACCHSs to ensure effective partnerships can be developed with Divisions;
 - facilitate the maximum input from Divisions to ensure effective partnerships can be developed with ACCHSs;
 - support ACCHSs to facilitate the provision of services; and
 - support Divisions of General Practice to facilitate the provision of services.
 - ADGP agrees to consult with NACCHO on general practice financing issues as they relate to Aboriginal health.
 - NACCHO and ADGP agree to identify common areas of interest on which to engage in joint advocacy.



The Agreement

This Memorandum commits NACCHO and ADGP to act together co-operatively, through agreed protocols, for a period of three years with the common purpose to:

1. Develop protocols and guidelines for Divisions of General Practice and NACCHO affiliate members to engage in collaborative consultation and develop effective partnerships.
2. Support the development and provision, through Divisions of General Practice, of opportunities for general practitioners (GPs) in Australia to enhance their awareness of issues in Aboriginal health and of the factors that will ensure effective, high quality primary health care services in Aboriginal communities within Australia.
3. Promote the philosophy that Divisions of General Practice have a role in supporting GPs and the primary health care team working in ACCHSs/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, and that the provision of support services and programs is a function for Divisions to undertake.
4. Work towards achieving the goal of each Aboriginal community having its own community based, locally-owned, culturally appropriate and adequately resourced primary health care service in which GPs have a role.
5. Encourage Divisions of General Practice and ACCHSs to recognise the population demographics within their communities and to address individual holistic health care needs.
6. Support involvement of Divisions of General Practice and ACCHSs in initiatives that encourage Aboriginal people to take up careers as health service providers.

Implementation

NACCHO and ADGP will meet twice in each year under this Memorandum to discuss progress and determine priorities. These meetings shall include the Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers of each organisation, together with agreed members of their Boards.

NACCHO and ADGP will develop an annual workplan that identifies specific areas for action.

Joint Working Groups of both organisations shall be established as required to implement action under this Memorandum.

This Memorandum will be reviewed six months before it expires, with a view to negotiating a further three year agreement.



NACCHO Chairperson
Henry Councillor



ADGP Chairperson
Dr Rob Walters

August 2003

Quote from the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

“Health does not simply mean the physical well being of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural well being of the whole community.

For Aboriginal people this is seen in terms of the whole of life view incorporating the cyclical concept of life – death – and the relationship to the land.

Health care services should strive to achieve the state where every individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being of their community.”



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