

# Using Data to Improve the Quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Assessments

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Nidjalla Waangan Mia Aboriginal Medical Service

## Introduction

Nidjalla Waangan Mia (NWM) is a health and wellbeing centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NWM was established in 2010 to help meet the health and wellbeing needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Peel region.

Located on Lakes Road in Mandurah, NWM delivers a range of culturally appropriate services to the local Aboriginal community. Services include GP clinics, Practice Nurse services, podiatry and diabetes education, health promotion and wellness activities, chronic disease management, dental, care coordination, outreach and family support and visiting specialist services.

NWM delivers a range of programs through State and Commonwealth initiatives. Mainstream general practices and health organisations can refer their eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in to our programs.

NWM is fully accredited against RACGP's General Practice Standards.



## Partners

- Key project partners include:
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Improvement Foundation



## Objectives

Improve chronic disease prevention and management for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander clients who attend NWM, through increasing the number and quality of Health Assessments (MBS item 715)

PLAN  
DO  
STUDY  
ACT

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>PLAN</b>  | Choose an idea for a system change that you believe may lead to improvement – this is usually done in a brainstorming session with the practice team |
| <b>DO</b>    | Implement the system change – Usually for a one month period   |
| <b>STUDY</b> | Compare data both prior and post   |
| <b>ACT</b>   | If data shows improvement then implement changes if not make adjustments and start the process with another system change                            |

## Methods

- The following ideas were used to complete PDSA cycles during the project;
- Change the Admin Process to ensure all clients who were due for a Health Assessment (MBS item 715) were “flagged”
- Change clinic flow and appointment system to ensure all clients were booked for 30 minutes with a Nurse/Aboriginal Health Worker prior to seeing GP
- Identify and train any Nurses/Aboriginal Health Workers who were not confident in completing the Health Assessments

We then participated in Collaborative Program with the Improvement Foundation and ACCHO's to improve the Quality of the Assessments that we were completing. Baseline Data was an average of 6 per month so a 6 month timeframe was set to reach a target average of 30 checks per month. The Target was exceeded by 6 as the average after 6 months was 36. A scale to measure Quality was developed and checks were audited using the scale. The Quality target was to achieve 95% quality which was achieved after 13 months.



We were all so proud to achieve the National AGPAL award.



We focus on building a collaborative, happy team by having regular lunch dates to celebrate our achievements



Enjoying Christmas with our colleagues, and with our community



## Lessons Learned

- We needed to build a system of leadership and support
- We needed to build internal capacity and the skills of our team
- We needed to establish roles and responsibilities across the team
- We needed to embed effective recall and reminder systems
- We needed to get buy in from our GPs!
- We learnt the importance of supporting each other and be prepared to step up in to different roles when needed
- Everybody needed to know why we do Health Assessments, including the clients and the staff.
- We learnt the importance of ongoing monitoring: MEASURE! MEASURE!
- If there were issues or objections, we needed to address them straight away
- Friendly competition works wonders!!
- Everybody in the team is Valued.....the nurse cant do the assessments if the transport driver cant get the client to the appointment
- The team is Rewarded for the hard work and the positive outcomes (see pictures above!!)



## Impact/What's next?

- ✓ Maintain our Aboriginal Health Worker/Nurse lead clinic system where all our clients see an Aboriginal Health Worker or a Nurse before they see the GP
- ✓ Focus on opportunistic care: Implement the systems and develop the knowledge of our team to ensure we can undertake health assessments at a time that is good for the client
- ✓ Develop the systems to enable our admin team to check client recalls when speaking to the client
- ✓ Ensure all new clients have a health assessment. This helps us get baseline information in relation to their health needs.
- ✓ Ensure all our clinical staff are upskilled to take Bloods onsite, do PAP smears, take blood sugars, and do immunisations
- ✓ Never ever stop working towards building the rapport, trust and positive relationships with our clients!
- ✓ Maintain our cultural safety and culturally appropriate care
- ✓ Recommend Follow-up Appointments to our clients and explain why!!

## Acknowledgements

- Dr William Walker – Lead Clinical GP at Nidjalla Waangan Mia
- The Improvement Foundation of Australia
- All Staff at Nidjalla Waangan Mia Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Service