



HEALTH EQUITY E-NEWS

Spring, 2014

¡Saludos! Greetings!

The Office of Health Equity (OHE) is very pleased to present its 2014 Spring E-news. In this issue you can find links about future and past events, statistics on refugees in Pennsylvania and announcements that support our mission of reducing health inequities in the commonwealth. Thanks for your support and commitment.

Hector R. Ortiz, Director, OHE

Dr. Hector Ortiz is pleased to present the newest staff member within the OHE.



Refugee Health Program – Social worker

Susan Bowers-Miller, LSW, recently joined Pennsylvania's OHE, Refugee Health Program (RHP). Her career as a social worker has been varied.

For a number of years, she provided protective services to children and youth at risk of abuse or neglect. She has also held positions in the areas of housing, mental health, developmental disabilities and vocational rehabilitation.

Susan's educational history includes a Bachelor of Social Work from Pennsylvania State University. She is also a Phi Kappa Phi graduate of the Master of Social Work Program at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. As a graduate student, she interned with Lutheran Social Services in the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program located in Washington, D.C.

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In this issue:

[2013 Summary Report](#)

[The Business Case for Racial Equity](#)

[National Minority Health Month Statement](#)

[Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)

[Medical Interpreter Training](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Announcements](#)

NEWS

Refugees in Pennsylvania – 2013 Summary Report

In 2013, 2,781 newly arriving refugees and eligible immigrants entered Pennsylvania. These refugees and eligible immigrants came from 71 countries and resettled in 28 Pennsylvania counties (29 percent in Philadelphia, 19 percent in Erie, 16 percent in Pittsburgh/Allegheny, 15 percent in Lancaster, 8 percent in Dauphin, 5 percent in Scranton/Lackawanna and 2 percent in Allentown/Lehigh).

A total of 1,782 refugees and eligible immigrants completed health screenings within the first 30 days of arrival. The largest numbers came from Southeast Asia (56 percent), Middle East (19 percent), Africa (16 percent) and Latin America/Pacific Islander (6 percent).

If you would like to access the 2013 refugee health report, please go to the Pa. Department of Health (PADOH) [website](#) under OHE.

[Back to Top](#)

The Business Case for Racial Equity



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR
RACIAL EQUITY

The business case for racial equity is a very interesting study on how race, class, residential segregation and income levels impact access and equal opportunity for health care in America. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is an organization that supports programs promoting racial healing and addressing racial inequity. The author of this study, Ani Turner from the Altarum Institute, addresses how to recognize the importance of racial equity, emphasizing that we live in a world “where race is no longer a factor in the distribution of opportunity – is a matter of social justice.”

One of the principles of this report is that moving toward racial equity can generate significant economic returns as well. “When people face barriers to achieving their full potential, the loss of talent, creativity, energy and productivity is a burden not only for those disadvantaged but for communities, businesses, governments and the economy as a whole.”

If you would like to read the whole report, click [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

MAY



[Better Sleep Month](#)



[Healthy Vision Month](#)

JUNE



[National Cancer Survivors
Day](#)



[National Men's Health Week](#)



[National HIV Testing Day](#)

National Minority Health Month Statement by Kathleen Sebelius

The theme for this year was, “Prevention is Power: Join us in Taking Action for Health Equity”

On April 4, 2014, former secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, gave a statement on National Minority Health Month, explaining that it is “time to raise awareness about health disparities that persist among racial and ethnic minorities.” Former Secretary Sebelius stated that “despite recent progress in addressing health disparities, great challenges remain.” She was able to give three strong examples showing disparities among African-Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives and non-Hispanic whites. If you would like to read former Secretary Sebelius’ full statement on National Minority Health Month, click [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month



On Thursday, May 1, 2014, the Interagency Cultural Celebration Taskforce hosted the Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebration at the Keystone Atrium Building. This year’s theme was, “Diverse Leadership + Expanding Opportunity: An Imperative for America.” For more information, click [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Medical Interpreter Training Offered Spring of 2014



In March and April, two medical interpreter trainings were sponsored by the RHP in the PADOH-OHE in collaboration with the Health Federation of Philadelphia. Participants were from various community-based organizations, healthcare providers and educational institutes. A total of 48 people passed and received qualified medical interpreter certificates.

The training was an opportunity to address the need for building internal capacity and cross-system competency throughout public and private healthcare systems in Pennsylvania.

UPCOMING EVENTS



2014 Pennsylvania Health Equity Conference

On Aug. 21 and 22, 2014, at the Radisson Convention Center located in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, the OHE, in collaboration with the health equity conference committee, the OHE advisory committee, the PADOH cultural competence taskforce, and many public health, healthcare and community organizations, will host the second biennial Health Equity Conference.

Approximately 300 private and public healthcare professionals from throughout Pennsylvania are expected to attend this conference. These physicians, nurses, social workers, public health officials and community partners will learn and share important health information that will assist them in their practices and in their communities. It will also be an opportunity to network and share ideas about how to better protect communities within the commonwealth.

The focus of this year's conference will be the impact of chronic disease and its associated risk factors for diverse populations, particularly for immigrants/refugees, as well as the role that socioeconomic differences, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, etc., play in creating health disparities. It includes, but is not limited to, cultural competence, language issues, health literacy, as well as the impact of the social determinants of health in achieving health equity.

For registration and additional information about the conference, click [here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Want to Become a Medical Provider for RHP?

To better serve the commonwealth's refugee population, the RHP continually encourages medical providers to partner with it. Becoming a RHP provider is especially important to those physicians and medical practices whose mission include outreach to underserved populations. For more information about the Pennsylvania RHP, please visit our website [here](#).

If you know a healthcare provider that may be interested in partnering with the RHP, please contact Susan Johnston at sjohnston@pa.gov.

[Back to Top](#)

Did You Know?

In 2013, Pennsylvania received 2,781 newly arriving refugees. Of the 2,781 refugees, 68 percent received interpretation services in 17 different languages. The most commonly used language for interpretation services was the Nepali language.

[Back to Top](#)

Share Your Story

If you are interested in submitting an upcoming event for your agency or you know about an organization using best practice, evidence-based programs to combat health inequities, please contact our office at katowens@pa.gov.

[Back to Top](#)