

# Bulletin

April 12, 2007

Minnesota Department of Human Services □ P.O. Box 64941 □ St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

**OF INTEREST TO**

- County Directors
- County Commissioners
- County Health and Human Services Supervisors and Staff
- Tribal Human Services Directors
- Tribal Human Services Agency Managers and Staff
- Civil Rights Designees
- MinnesotaCare Supervisors and Staff
- State Operated Services (SOS) Managers and Staff

**ACTION/DUE DATE**

Please review and renew efforts to use the guidelines in planning and delivering services to consumers.

**EXPERATION DATE**

April 12, 2009

## DHS Directs Service Providers' Attention to Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organizations

**TOPIC**

DHS reminds service providers of a resource tool, *Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organizations*, which is available on the DHS website.

**PURPOSE**

To restate DHS' ongoing commitment to the provision of culturally effective access to human services and health care programs, and remind county and tribal agencies and other business partners that a tool issued in 2004, *Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organizations*, remains available as a resource. This bulletin updates and replaces Bulletin 04-89-01.

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**SIGNED**

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TIM WILKIN  
Assistant Commissioner  
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## **Background**

Minnesota leads the nation in providing access to human services and in key client outcomes. Yet we lag among certain groups, particularly people of color, people with disabilities, and rural Minnesotans. Governor Pawlenty has characterized reducing disparities as one of the greatest challenges facing Minnesota.

These disparities are unacceptable and efforts are underway to better identify the gaps, set goals, and implement targeted, coordinated strategies to improve access to services and achieve equity in outcomes for people. Improving outcomes is a top priority for the department. Providing additional information on organizational and individual cultural competency to staff is an important step in accomplishing this goal. In working towards meeting these objectives, DHS published its *Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organizations* for Minnesota health and human services organizations in 2004. (See last page of this bulletin for location details.)

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the guidelines:**

- **Why do we need guidelines for cultural competency?**

Organizations that are culturally competent are better able to serve people through their programs and services, and enhance the likelihood of better outcomes for those they serve. Did you know that:

- American Indian and African American infant mortality rates remain more than twice as high as those for infants of European ancestry (9.9% and 10.2% respectively, as compared with 4.8%)?
- An estimated 47 % of adult Minnesotans with disabilities were employed compared with 81 % of adult Minnesotans without disabilities in 2005?
- About 34 % of rural Minnesotans, age 65 years and older with incomes at or below the federal poverty guideline, participate in the Food Support program, compared with 75 % in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties?

Reducing such disparities for the people we serve is a top priority for DHS, and providing these guidelines is one way to help us accomplish this.

- **What are these guidelines for?**

Cultural differences play a role in how clients participate in our programs and services and impact outcomes for clients. These guidelines are designed for Minnesota health and human services organizations to better serve their culturally diverse clients. The guidelines are based on a nationwide review of literature and standards, including the federal Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards for health care, developed by health providers, consumers, advocates, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at <http://www.omhrc.gov>.

- **What am I expected to do with them?**

Please acquaint yourself with the guidelines. Find one or two concepts that you can apply to your work, then implement them. DHS understands that your organization may have already begun or plans to continue implementing a cultural competency program. These guidelines are presented as a tool to help you and your organization along the path toward becoming more culturally competent.

- **Who are the guidelines aimed at?**

All DHS employees, contractors, counties, tribes, providers and business partners are encouraged to use the guidelines to enhance their cultural competence. DHS has developed these guidelines to share with our employees and business partners to foster an environment where people who use the human services system in Minnesota are receiving the most culturally appropriate services possible.

- **Where can I find the guidelines?**

The *Guidelines for Culturally Competent Organizations* is published electronically by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and is available in PDF format via a direct link at <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Legacy/DHS-3963-ENG>

or at the:

DHS Public Web site: <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>

Click on "Publications"

Scroll down to the header "Cultural Competence Guidelines Published"

Select either the .PDF (Adobe) version (easy to print) or an .HTML version (easy to manipulate text)

A set of cultural competency guidelines for working with American Indians is also available at this site: <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Legacy/DHS-4086-ENG>

The DHS guidelines are a public domain document and may be copied and printed without permission of the publisher. However, please be sure to include all references and sources cited if you print and/or distribute the document.

Please read, use, and share this resource tool as we continue to work together to provide equity in access and outcomes to the Minnesotans we serve.

### **Special Needs**

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-3040 (voice), or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TDD) or 7-1-1, or at 1-877-627-3848 (speech to speech relay service).