Monday, July 30, 2012

**Healthcare staff undertake Aboriginal cultural training**

Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) staff across central and inner west Sydney will undergo cultural awareness training to help them understand and respect Aboriginal culture so they can offer improved patient care.

The Respecting the Difference training framework, developed by NSW Health, is designed to improve staff knowledge and understanding of the diverse culture, customs, heritage and protocols in Aboriginal families and communities in NSW.

The training consists of an e-learning module and two face-to-face components.

SLHD Director, Aboriginal Health, George Long, said SLHD staff had commenced the on-line training. He said the first face-to-face component would cover generic issues for Aboriginal people, while the second component would focus more specifically on local issues.

Mr Long said a Respecting the Difference project officer was being recruited to support the roll out of the program across the District, in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community.

“SLHD is deeply committed to Aboriginal health equity,” Mr Long said.

“We want members of the local Aboriginal community to feel safe and confident when they visit our health services.

“We recognise that healthcare outcomes for Aboriginal people can be improved when all our staff have a greater awareness of Aboriginal culture.

“Aboriginal health requires a holistic approach. This means we need to look at not only physical wellbeing but kinship, family, spiritual beliefs and language, as all these elements are connected and impact on the health and wellbeing of the community.

“The cultural training is for all staff, who will be challenged on any preconceived beliefs and perceptions about working with and providing health services to Aboriginal communities.

“Our staff will learn about contemporary Aboriginal culture and issues and be more responsive to the needs of the Aboriginal community in terms of access and cultural appropriateness,” he said.