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Professional Issues
Cultural Competence Paper
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Cultural Competence

In today's society cultural competence has become more important to understand and to practice. Cultural competence is defined as the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with persons from cultures and/or belief systems other than one's own, based on various factors. Not only is it important to understand and appreciate the culture but to respect their beliefs as well. Failure to recognize and understand sociocultural differences could have significant consequences for the minority groups in our country.

An organization that has been lacking in cultural competence in the United States is the health care system. "Sociocultural differences among patients, health care providers, and the health care system, in particular, are seen by health care experts as potential causes for disparities. These differences, which may influence providers' decision-making and interactions between patients and the health care delivery system, may include: variations in patients' ability to recognize clinical symptoms of disease and illness, thresholds for seeking care, expectations of care, and the ability to understand the prescribed treatment (Betancourt, Green, and Carrillo 2002)."

In order to make a difference in this area our healthcare system needs to start taking steps to become for culturally competent. In order to do this they could hire a multicultural manager to reflect the diversity of the staff and patients and to emphasize

diversity throughout the organization. This includes making resources available for minority groups such as translators and multilingual websites. They need to focus more on the entire organization and on the opportunity to improve services and business as a whole, rather than a case by case basis.

Another area that cultural competence is important is community health. One of the best ways to create a more diverse community health program is to “form partnerships with community-based organizations to help establish culturally competent, community-oriented primary care. Such an approach makes good business sense, especially in a demographically changing environment (Betancourt, Green, and Carrillo 2002).”

In order to achieve a more culturally competent health care system we first have to educate and train the people who work in the system. Training, which may include education in cultural competence for senior management, healthcare providers, and staff, should focus on knowledge and skills and equip providers to deliver quality care to all patients. Socio Cultural training should be a required and integrated component of the training and professional development of health care providers at all levels

Our country and community has come a long way in becoming more culturally competent but it is an ever evolving process and we need to continue to learn and grow. “Cultural competence should not be a stand-alone process or outcome but should be integrated into all levels of the organization (Betancourt, Green, and Carrillo 2002).”

References:

Betancourt , J., Green, A., & Carrillo, E. (2002, October). CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN HEALTH CARE: EMERGING FRAMEWORKS AND PRACTICAL APPROACHES .

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<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ohpp/clasact/documents/clasact/general/culturealcompetence.pdf>