

Health Equity Policy

RATIONALE

The patient population at Rolleston Central Health (RCH) is made up of individuals and families from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including Tangata Whenua Māori. RCH values cultural diversity and recognises that embracing diversity and fostering culturally competent practice has a positive impact on health outcomes for all patients. RCH believes that patients of all cultural backgrounds should be able to access excellent quality healthcare services and treatment and have these services delivered to them in a culturally inclusive and respectful manner. RCH is committed to the ongoing education of practice staff to ensure culturally competent practice in day-to-day operations. Therefore, RCH aims to be inclusive in the way it delivers healthcare services to patients from all backgrounds, working to remove barriers to healthcare and address any issues of inequity that may prevent patients from accessing services.

ADDRESSING INEQUITIES IN HEALTHCARE FOR TANGATA WHENUA MAORI

RCH recognizes that there have historically been and currently are inequities embedded within Aotearoa's healthcare system which creates barriers for our indigenous population when accessing healthcare services. Therefore, addressing health inequities and removing barriers to healthcare services will improve health outcomes for Tangata Whenua Māori. RCH are committed to addressing barriers leading to inequities, and providing practice staff with education around, and a deeper understanding of Māori culture within the healthcare sector to enable the practice to work collaboratively with Māori patients towards achieving positive health outcomes.

TERMINOLOGY

Equity in healthcare refers to the absence of avoidable or remediable differences amongst groups of people to enable them to access excellent quality healthcare services necessary to lead healthy lives. For RCH, this entails an ongoing commitment to providing equal access to resources within the center regardless of the background of the patient, to acknowledging and eliminating potential barriers to resources for identified groups of patients, and to delivering services in a culturally inclusive environment that best meets the needs of our patients.

Inequities in healthcare refers to acknowledgement that there are unjust and unfair differences in the health status of different groups of people, and that these result in differential access to resources within healthcare that they require to sustain healthy lives. RCH as a practice acknowledges that there have been longstanding barriers to healthcare in Aotearoa for certain identified groups of people, particularly Tangata Whenua, and are committed to identifying and removing barriers in order to eliminate these inequities and improve health outcomes for our patients.

Equity groups are identified specific groups of individuals who, based on their perceived characteristics, have historically experienced one or more barriers to accessing healthcare resources and services.

Discrimination is any practice that makes distinctions between individuals and groups, based on their distinctive characteristics, that disadvantages some people and/or advantages others when providing access to healthcare services.

Tangata Whenua translates to 'people of the land' and refers to the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, also known to us as Māori.

Cultural Competence refers to the ability and openness to interact effectively with and understand patients from various cultural groups. At RCH we value cultural diversity and understand that the ability of staff to interact effectively with patients from different cultural groups is a significant factor in positively influencing equity in access to healthcare services.

COMMITMENTS

1. We regard equitable access to healthcare services as essential for achieving positive health outcomes for our patients and achieving our organisation's goals
2. We respect and value the cultures of all our patients and the diversity their membership brings to our practice, including Tangata Whenua Māori
3. We are committed to attaining equitable health outcomes for all our patients, particularly those pertaining to equity groups, especially Tangata Whenua Māori
4. We regard discrimination as unfair, unacceptable, and unlawful and will not tolerate its active practice
5. We acknowledge that the passive practice of discrimination is a systemic issue that exacerbates inequities in healthcare throughout Aotearoa and are dedicated to eliminating this
6. We recognise our key role in educating all staff about the professional and personal benefits of self-reflection, recognising discrimination and unconscious bias and what action to take
7. We recognise the importance of culturally competent practice and will endeavour to supply ongoing training and support for our staff to have positive and effective interactions with our culturally diverse groups of patients
8. We acknowledge the importance of creating common ground in which patients pertaining to equity groups can develop and thrive equally in a culture of inclusion.
9. We are committed to creating and implementing the best possible policies, strategies and interventions to make RCH an inclusive place where all patients are equal and can access services with ease that best meet their health requirements
10. We are committed to follow these principles in the daily running of the practice, including staff recruitment, and the professional development of staff
11. We are committed to follow these principles in our daily interactions with patients, including patient consultations and correspondence, and in the interactions between our staff members when discussing patient care

Authorised by Dr Phil Schroeder

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