

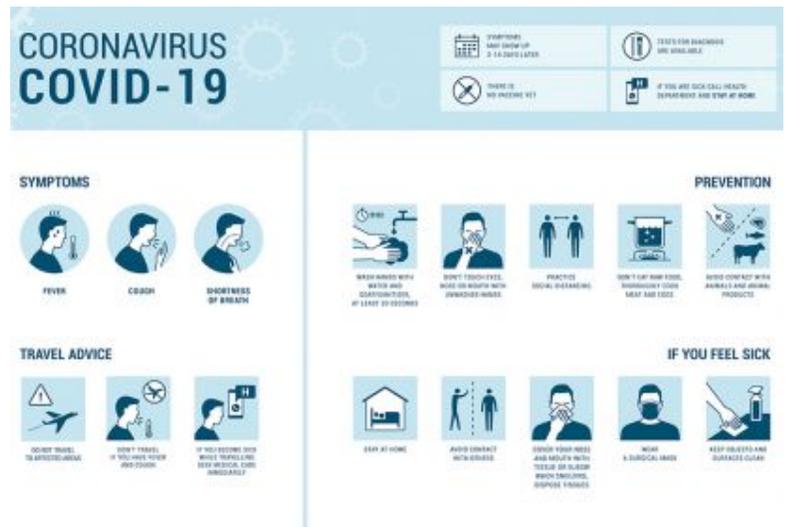
Governments must improve COVID-19 communications to CALD communities

April 08, 2020

Federation has joined with several community groups appealing for governments to effectively report COVID-19 directives to people with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

“Information is not reaching into many CALD communities in a way that actively engages the communities and individuals to enable them to fully understand what is required of them now and into the coming weeks of the COVID-19 response nationally,” letters sent to federal, state and territory health ministers state.

“It is particularly clear that messages about behaviour change and social isolation are not getting through to CALD communities, leaving them vulnerable as community transmission of the virus begins to climb,” noted Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria chairperson Eddie Micallef, Settlement Service International chief executive officer Violet Roumeliotis, Migration Institute of Australia chair John Hourigan, National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters’ Council executive officer Russell Anderson, HOST International chief executive officer David Keegan and Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos.



The organisations are calling on the federal Department of Health to ensure appropriate advice, in a wide spread of languages, is disseminated through communication channels preferred by CALD communities.

State and territory departments of health are asked to ensure translated advice is tailored to their populations and that the messages are received.

“Our organisations are ready and willing to assist in these activities,” the organisation heads said. “Together with government we must ensure that CALD communities are not left behind in their access to and understanding of COVID-19, and are not made more vulnerable than other parts of the Australian community because they have become an afterthought in the rapid response to curbing infections.”

The letters also acknowledge the vulnerable position of many women from CALD backgrounds: juggling unpaid care work with remote employment or lost employment compounding poverty issues and family stress.

“Gendered violence while self-isolating will also leave many women from migrant and refugee backgrounds at increased risk in the current environment. Access to translated information through appropriate communication channels for CALD women is also of heightened importance,” the letters implore.

[Read the open letter here.](#)