

# Get Involved: Pray

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## EMBRACE Prayer Group November 2011

Last month a conference on minority ethnic health and wellbeing issues in Northern Ireland took place in Belfast. The goal of the gathering was to raise awareness of migrant health needs and to stimulate action by exploring the potential for establishing a 'good practice' network and to share learning. The conference brought together people from across the public and voluntary sector as well as the minority ethnic community. In addition to recognising the great wealth of experience and culture that the minority ethnic population brings to Northern Ireland, the conference also drew attention to the fact that they can also represent one of the most vulnerable groups. In my role as Race Relations Coordinator for South Belfast I gave a presentation at the conference on Roma health and wellbeing issues in Northern Ireland.

Current guidelines on the rights of migrants in relation to health care are not always clear and can make it difficult for health care staff on the ground to provide the service and care required. New migrants in particular may have complex health needs, but may also have difficulty getting the support they need from our health and social care system. For example, many people from Romania and Bulgaria can only access emergency care and do not have a right to a GP which can put an added strain on A&E services.

To help address some of these issues it is hoped there might be funding for a new pilot 'one-stop-shop' for migrants in the Belfast area. Such a project would complement existing services and offer assessments, screenings and other advice on holistic health and social wellbeing. This could be one positive initiative that would hopefully help to address some of the gaps in our current health care system.

*Contributed by Denise Wright*

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### We give thanks for ...

- Gatherings that bring people together to raise awareness, share experiences and to learn from one another.
- The many people who serve others in Northern Ireland's health and social care system.

### We pray for ...

- Health care staff who are facing new challenges at a time when resources are being cut.
- Those who are chronically ill and cannot access the care and services they need.
- New creative initiatives like the 'one-stop-shop' that might seek to provide care and advice for those who have recently moved to Northern Ireland.