NTCS STUDENT WINS RURAL DOCTOR AWARD

Jeremy Wells (Yr 3 GEMP) has recently been jointly awarded the Rural Doctors Association of Australia medical student of the year award. Jeremy is currently completing his third year of medicine in Darwin, having spent Semester 1 in Alice Springs. His Alice Springs term included clinical placements at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, the hospital outpatient clinic, and visits to remote communities. Jeremy has a strong interest in Indigenous health. He was one of the founding members of the Students Interested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health group at Flinders University (SIATSIH). Congratulations Jeremy on this outstanding achievement.

"I have loved my time up here in Darwin, but I think my heart has been left behind in Alice Springs. The beauty and age of the landscape, the complex but invigorating mix of cultures, the breadth and peculiarity of the medicine, the opportunity to be learning at one of the coalfaces of our generation, the unwilting support of the staff at the Rural Clinical School; these are all things that I have left behind and which I miss greatly. I know I will end up working back in that part of the world before too long.

As a medical student, you're a bit silly if you think you can make very much of a difference, especially over such a short period; what you can do, however, is become excited about the kind of work you would like to do one day as a doctor and where you would like to do it, and you can try to convince your colleagues that they should be excited too. If this award recognises my general high excitement about what the future holds for me as a rural doctor in this incredible country of ours, and my excitement on behalf of all those who choose a similar career path, then I am very happy to accept it. So here’s cheers to rural and remote medicine, and this blessed opportunity to experience it before we’re even qualified as doctors! And here’s a big cheers also to all the patients from out bush who let us come onto their land to learn and to practise our skills and to dream about the future."

Jeremy Wells Year 3 GEMP student
The NTCS recently welcomed over a dozen second year Flinders medical students to a ‘taste’ of the NT outback through the Regional Community Week (RCW) program. The RCW is an initiative of Flinders University which requires all second-year medical students to undertake a full week of group activities in a rural, regional or remote setting. The primary objective of the week is to experience the community from a health perspective and to develop an understanding of how the community and health networks collaborate to achieve results. It is an ideal time for the students to explore the community as a potential future site of practice.

Here in the NT, students were placed at Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alice Springs. Overwhelmingly, students agreed the experience was positive and had increased their interest in taking up a career in rural medicine. In the words of one of the students, “the week was more than I could have ever expected”. Several interactive session were also packed into the busy week all designed to give a taste of what it is like to live in the community. NTCS believe this positive experience correlates with a positive change in the students intention to consider a rural career in the future. Local staff played a significant role in supporting the students and ensuring that their placement was a positive one.

A secondary objective of the program was to undertake a brief research project; identifying the community’s understanding of the NT Rural Clinical School. Residents were surveyed in central locations of the respective communities. The outcome of this research has provided valuable insight into the communities expectations of the NTRCS. Issues identified include the need for the NTRCS to be more focused on the training of medical professionals and to improve teaching for medical students in remote and Indigenous health. Finally, the surveys identified the need for the NTRCS to increase local community awareness.

The RCW for 2008 was a very positive experience all round, with sincere thanks going to the residents and clinicians of the respective communities, who welcomed the students and answered their many questions.

Mr Richard Sager, Lecturer Allied Health, Rural and Remote Medicine

REGIONAL COMMUNITY WEEK IN ALICE

Seven Flinders University Yr2 students arrived in Alice Springs on Monday 20th to Friday 25th October for the Regional Community Week. The students visited St John’s Ambulance, Anzac High School, Hermannsburg Community, Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Alice Springs Reptile Centre. Surveys were conducted outside Coles, the Post Office & Target.

The students had a great week in Alice, and staff and lecturers loved having them to visit.
REGIONAL COMMUNITY WEEK IN NHULUNBUY

Northern Territory Rural Clinical School in Nhulunbuy recently participated in their first Regional Community Week. With the invaluable assistance of Rio Tinto Alcan we were able to host 4 second year student doctors from Flinders University in Adelaide who spent the week with two of our senior lecturers from Darwin and myself learning about rural remote and indigenous health, visiting local health facilities and undertaking a research and evaluation project. The four Flinders students met up with our two long term final year students from James Cook University, Dan Kulbac and Dev Tilakaratne, who are preparing for internship next year by working alongside our hardworking multitalented rural practitioners at Gove District Hospital. We also have two other visiting medical students in town from other southern universities sponsored by Northern Territory General Practice Education who are having a wonderful learning experience working partly at the hospital and partly with our other health organisations including Miwatj Child Health Team, East Arnhem Mental Health Service and Endeavour Clinic.

The RCW students had a wonderful time during their week in the remote Top End and hopefully some will return for further training and eventually choose to work in the region. Many thanks to all the community members who assisted the students in their learning by participating in the survey or agreeing to have a student doctor involved in their care. Our particular thanks go to those who took time out from their busy schedules to spend time educating our junior students on skills and knowledge required for living in the bush, including Terry Yunumull from Miwatj, Ian McIntyre from Rio Tinto Alcan, Wayne Bevan from the Ambulance service and Matthew Alterator from Youthworks. We would also like to extend our thanks to the busy members of our Local Advisory Group who continue to work with us to make sure all our students feel like part of our community while they are with us.

Debbie McIntyre, Administration Officer, NTRCS Nhulunbuy Campus

REGIONAL COMMUNITY WEEK IN KATHERINE

Matthew Turner (NTCS), Justin Maroney (Aboriginal Health Worker, Binjari Health Service), Justin Mota and Flinders Yr 2 student prepare to go hunting

Flinders Year 2 students exploring the Katherine region
RESEARCH PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT & INVITATION

Allied Health Student Work-Integrated Learning in the NT:
What makes an effective placement, how local training impacts the local workforce, and how AHWIL is perceived by stakeholders

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. What makes a good AHWIL placement?
2. How important is local coordination and administration?
3. What does the government think/know about AHWIL placements?
4. How do AHWIL placements impact on workforce?

Objectives of our study:
1. To identify the benefits and barriers to student training in Allied Health workplaces in the NT
2. To define the features of effective AHWIL models
3. To evaluate the impact of AHWIL placements on the local AH workforce

Why do this study?
Despite the significant positive impact Allied Health professionals have on the wellbeing of the population:
• key features of effective AHWIL placements (e.g., duration, teaching model) are poorly defined.
• Visibility, priority and prominence of AHWIL in policy, funding allocations, and community understanding is limited.

What will our study add?
Our study directly addresses the gaps described above to provide a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and barriers to AHWIL in regards to:
• Student satisfaction and training experience
• Allied Health professional attitude and motivation
• Effects of local coordination on local workforce
• Understanding how government knowledge and policy impacts on Allied Health professionals and work-integrated learning placements
• Increasing insights about how teaching impacts on AH workforce morale, recruitment, and retention

What does AHWIL mean?
Allied Health Work -Integrated Learning. This is the term now being used for student placements within workplaces.

In light of increasing AH student enrolments, the outcomes of this research will be valuable for planning sustainable and supported student placement opportunities for the allied health professions in the Northern Territory

Research (No 07/87) approved through Menzies School of Health Research, NT.

YOUR INPUT IS KEY TO THIS PROJECT!

What we need:
Allied health professionals and managers willing to participate in focus groups & interviews
Allied health students willing to participate in online anonymous surveys

Two ways you can help:
Volunteer to participate – call us
Notify us of student placements planned for your workplace – call us

Contact us:
Narelle Campbell  Anna Smedts  Richard Sager
Northern Territory Clinical School  Building 4, Level 1, Royal Darwin Hospital, Rocklands Drive, Tiwi
PO Box 41326 Casuarina, NT 0811  Email: alliedhealth.ntcs@flinders.edu.au
Ph: 1800 773 1800 or 89227959  Website: www.ntmed.flinders.edu.au
Fax: 08 8922 7928
NTCS
GREENING THE CLINICAL SCHOOL

Healthy people require a healthy planet! In a world where our health is linked to our interactions with the environment, and climate change is one of the greatest public health concerns of this century, NTCS is greening its workplace.

An environmental audit was undertaken at NTCS. NTCS’s greening goal is to create awareness which will lead people to strive for better efficiency, in turn reducing the need to offset carbon emissions resulting in a more sustainable environment.

One of the most important things that the Clinical School is striving for with this project is to change our behaviour and be proactive. By acknowledging the need to monitor our environmental performance, we are improving our ecological footprint. Our 10 steps encourage us to achieve this:

10 Steps to a Greener Workplace

- **Reduce energy usage** through activating computers energy saving power settings, switching off lights, IT equipment and all appliances when not in use.

- **Reduce paper usage** by defaulting all computers to double sided printing, reuse once-used paper, use laptops for lengthy minutes. Ultimately ‘think before you print’.

- **Recycle all we can** including paper, batteries, IT equipment, furniture, printer cartridges, cardboard, bottles, cans, cartons etc.

- **Reduce air travel** by improving conferencing facilities so that travel is kept to a minimum.

- **Use biodegradable products** or durable crockery, cups, plates, bags.

- **Utilise sustainable transport** by encouraging staff to walk, cycle, utilise public transport or carpool.

- **Be Waterwise** and aware of leaking taps.

- **Responsible environmental purchasing** e.g. socially responsible, local products, recycled paper, notebooks, pens.

- **Demonstrate environmental responsibility** by being pro-active towards a sustainable environment with positive behaviour.

- **Dress for the climate** by wearing the appropriate clothes according to the weather.
HIGHLIGHTS 2008 AND THE YEAR AHEAD 2009

NTCS HIGHLIGHTS 2008

- CBME commenced in Darwin
- Opening of Nhulunbuy Campus
- First Year 4 Rural Core Rotation in Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy
- NTCS Website upgraded - www.ntmed.flinders.edu.au
- NTCS 10 Year History published
- Flinders Regional Community Week held in Alice, Katherine and Nhulunbuy
- Year 3 Laynhapuy Health placements
- Paper presented at Ozzawa conference in Melbourne
- Papers presented at Iceman Conference in Canada
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer employed
- Allied Health Research commenced (AHWIL)
- Greening of NTCS office

2009 - THE YEAR AHEAD.....

- Increased student numbers - 21 Flinders GEMP Year 3 students and 10 Year 5 JCU students
- Refitting of hospital auditorium with V/C capability for student teaching sessions and RDH Grand Rounds.
- Clinical Audit Program

Nhulunbuy NTRCS opened on 23 April 2008 at Miwatj Health House

CLINICAL AUDIT PROGRAM

Final year Flinders University students are required to complete a Clinical Audit assignment during their Core Rotation placements. In 2009, the NTCS will request that students develop their audit based on a list of topics which have been determined to meet the specific and immediate needs of our community and hospital. Students will present their findings to their department as well as the Quality & Safety Officer at the end of their placement, ensuring that their findings be locally recognised and actioned. This change in process reflects our commitment to creating a more symbiotic relationship between the school and the health services, and between the student, the clinical team, and the community.

If you are interested in the Clinical Audit assignments, would like to add to the list of available topics, or could mentor a student through the process, please contact Anna Smedts (anna.smedts@flinders.edu.au).
STAFF UPDATES

- Associate Professor Sarah Strasser has been appointed Associate Dean of the new Rural and Remote Health Cluster of Flinders School of Medicine. This new structure of the Flinders School of Medicine will come into place in 2009. Congratulations Sarah on this exciting new position. Sarah will continue her role as Director CBME and NTRCS part time.

- Dr Simon Morgan has resigned from NTCS and we are seeking a replacement Senior Lecturer in General Practice.

TWIN GIRLS FOR SAMARA

Samara Baldwin began 2008 with the Year 5 JCU cohort at NTCS, but bigger things were in the stars for her this year. On 22 October she gave birth to twin girls, Ava Jane and Halle Amiyhan Hodgson. At birth, Ava weighed 2.80kg and Halle 2.74kg. We wish Samara and Richie the very best with their two little bundles of joy. Congratulations.

CONTACT DETAILS

Northern Territory Clinical School
Postal Address:
PO Box 41326
Casuarina NT 0811

Ph: 1800 773 180  Email: admin.ntcs@flinders.edu.au
Fax: 08 8922 7928  Website: www.ntmed.flinders.edu.au

Location:
Building 4, Level 1
Royal Darwin Hospital
Rocklands Drive, Tiwi