



*Welcome to the PCC4U project newsletter. Our aim is to promote the uptake of PCC4U resources in all universities which offer medical, nursing and allied health training; extend and develop networks among participating universities; and develop strategies for the ongoing sustainability of the PCC4U project.*

*If you would like the project team to visit you to introduce PCC4U resources, help you with curriculum mapping, or customisation of learning resources or deliver a partnership or curriculum workshop, please contact a PCC41 project manager*

*(contact details are on page 4).*

## Project in brief

The PCC4U project is an initiative of the Australian Department of Health and Ageing through the National Palliative Care Program. It aims to promote the inclusion of palliative care education as an integral part of all medical, nursing and allied health undergraduate training.

## Project update

### Project status

The project team has recently conducted an online survey of universities implementing PCC4U resources, to identify how the resources are being incorporated in curricula and the impact the resources are having on undergraduate education in the health professions. Preliminary survey results are available in this newsletter.

### Where to from here?

Planning for 2009–10 has identified a series of priorities for the final 12 months of the project.

#### Project Activities

- Promote ongoing networks and partnerships in undergraduate palliative care education
- Deliver teaching and learning workshops in each state in 2009
- Encourage use of project resources for course improvement activities
- Conduct 2009 site visits
- Plan for the PCC4U Conference in 2010

#### Project Resources

- Update current curriculum resources
- Extend the range of support materials available, particularly evaluation, mapping and assessment tools

### PCC4U course improvement initiatives

The PCC4U project is supporting a number of improvement initiatives in several courses to promote the integration of palliative care in undergraduate curricula. These include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, nursing and medicine courses. The initiatives aim to support the development of graduates to be better equipped to provide palliative care. Financial support and curriculum support continues to be available in 2009 for these initiatives on an individual course basis. If you have ideas or plans for how you wish to promote the inclusion of palliative care in your course and would like to access this support, please contact the project coordinators.



## Implementation update

To date the PCC4U team has invited all 39 universities and 186 health and allied health courses to be part of the project. All courses have now received at a minimum an email invitation to review the PCC4U resources, with 115 sites (67) accepting the offer. The number of courses implementing PCC4U resources has grown from 31 per cent in November 2008 to 37 per cent (69) with 14 per cent (26) indicating they will use the resources in the future, a combined total of 95 courses (51).

A summary of the number of sites participating in the PCC4U program, as at May 2009 is presented below.

| Universities | Courses contacted | Resource requests | Implementing | In the future | Following up | Will not use |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 39           | 186               | 115               | 69           | 26            | 68           | 23           |
|              | 100%              | 67%               | 37%          | 14%           | 36%          | 12%          |

## Annual palliative care audit

An annual online survey of all university undergraduate courses (n=186) was undertaken early in 2009. Fifty-seven courses or 30 per cent responded, providing valuable insight into project outcomes. The survey will be repeated early in 2010. Some of the survey data are presented below:

|  | Not at all |     | To a minor degree |     | To a moderate degree |     | To a large degree |    | Total |
|--|------------|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|-------|
| 1. Overall, to what degree is palliative care covered in your course/program?            | 4          | 7%  | 32                | 58% | 17                   | 31% | 2                 | 4% | 55    |
| 2. To what degree is palliative care assessed as a specific area within this curriculum? | 18         | 34% | 20                | 37% | 13                   | 25% | 3                 | 5% | 55    |

**10. The following are some core capabilities identified as being important to providing palliative care. How well do you feel your learning and teaching strategies assisted students to develop these capabilities?**

|  | Not at all |     | To a minor degree |     | To a moderate degree |     | To a large degree |     | Don't know |    | Total |
|--|------------|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|------------|----|-------|
| 10a. Effectively communicating with people facing loss and grief, existential challenges, and changing goals of care | 4          | 7%  | 20                | 36% | 21                   | 38% | 10                | 18% |            |    | 55    |
| 10b. Understanding and responding to different needs throughout illness trajectory                                   | 3          | 5%  | 20                | 37% | 19                   | 35% | 12                | 22% |            |    | 54    |
| 10c. Understanding the principles for assessment and management of clinical and supportive care needs                | 6          | 11% | 14                | 26% | 21                   | 39% | 12                | 22% | 1          | 2% | 54    |
| 10d. The capacity for reflection and self-evaluation of one's professional and personal experiences                  | 2          | 4%  | 10                | 18% | 17                   | 31% | 24                | 44% | 1          | 2% | 54    |

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# Monash University – Capacity building palliative care professionals using PCC4U resources

## Report on curriculum development from Dr Susan Lee

### What are the key proposals/changes in undergraduate palliative care curricula?

For some years in the Bachelor of Nursing at Monash University, the teaching of palliative care has occurred in a serendipitous way. We have traditionally had about five hours of dedicated palliative care objectives in third year of the nursing program; however in other parts of the program staff with a clinical background in palliative care liberally used palliative care examples in their teaching.

In the last review of the Bachelor of Nursing in 2007, electives were introduced into the second and third year of the program. However there was little financial support for substantial curriculum development, so students sort electives from across the university in other health and non-health disciplines. In early 2009, we were approached by a regional palliative care service to develop a continuing education program for health workers to build capacity for the provision of palliative care in non-specialist environments. The short course, based on the PCC4U resources, has been developed to contain both theoretical and clinical competency elements.

Serendipity once again has enabled us to capitalise on an opportunity to take a long-term view of capacity building. We have proposed the first of two undergraduate electives that will use our experiences

and resources developed in the continuing education program, incorporating the PCC4U resources to offer a multidisciplinary elective across the Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences. The first elective will focus on theoretical components of the PCC4U objectives and the second elective will enable students to develop clinical competencies.

### What has informed these changes?

In 2006, as a part of the pilot of the PCC4U resources, the Palliative Care Research Team at School of Nursing and Midwifery undertook a multidisciplinary approach. The pilot produced limited results due to research design limitations; however the student response and learning experience was encouraging. Engagement in the pilot enabled us to familiarise ourselves with the PCC4U resources and visualise the potential for this project.

### In what undergraduate courses will these occur?

The first elective introduction to palliative care unit will be offered in the Bachelor of Nursing program in 2010. We intend to offer the elective to other students in the Faculty including those in Medicine, Emergency Health, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Health Science and Social Work. More broadly, we are also looking at the feasibility of non-health-related disciplines undertaking the theoretical unit, from a health-promoting palliative care perspective. We consider that particular aspects of the unit may be valuable for sociology or education students.

### How will the PCC4U resources be used?

The framework for the theoretical unit has come from the 'Principles for including palliative care in undergraduate curricula' (2005). In addition, the online platform 'blackboard' is being used to present many of the activities and video material produced from the PCC4U resources.

The PCC4U resources form a basis from which to build learning resources and activities. We will be adding specific learning objectives, readings and group activities, discussion boards for specific topics and interactions with staff. We are aware of special topic interests in our local region such as end-of-life care pathways and advance care planning which will added to the learning activities in the short course and in our undergraduate unit. In addition, the formative and summative evaluations of learning will be significantly developed with mechanisms for 360 degree feedback to staff regarding the quality of the unit and learning.

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## Annual palliative care audit (continued)

### 4. Have you used the PCC4U resources?

Twenty-nine (50 per cent) indicated Yes

### 5. If you have not used the PCC4U resources do you intend to in the future?

Sixteen (28 per cent) indicated Yes

### 6. Has your curriculum and amount of time devoted to palliative care changed since adopting the PCC4U resources?

|   |                      | Number | % of Total |
|---|----------------------|--------|------------|
| 1 | Not at all           | 15     | 37%        |
| 2 | To a minor degree    | 15     | 37%        |
| 3 | To a moderate degree | 3      | 7%         |
| 4 | To a large degree    | 2      | 5%         |
| 5 | Don't know           | 3      | 7%         |
|   | Total                | 29     | 100%       |



## Four core graduate capabilities

Four graduate capabilities have been identified as being essential for health professionals to provide a palliative approach to care for persons with a life-limiting illness:

1. Effective communication in the context of an individual's responses to loss and grief, existential challenges, uncertainty and changing goals of care
2. Appreciation of and respect for the diverse human and clinical responses of each individual throughout their illness trajectory

3. Understanding of principles for assessment and management of clinical and supportive care needs
4. The capacity for reflection and self evaluation of one's professional and personal experiences and their cumulative impact on the self and others

## Monash University – Capacity building palliative care professionals using PCC4U resources (continued)

### What are the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) from inclusion of the PCC4U learning resources in undergraduate curricula?

Inclusion of PCC4U in the undergraduate curriculum exposes students to principles and practices of palliative care, multidisciplinary practice, end-of-life care and advance care planning considerations, community-based care management, loss and grief, family care and bereavement at a more consistent level than had been previously been offered in the undergraduate program. Palliative care is presented as an evidence-based approach to care management when illness is life limiting. Further, it is presented as a responsibility of all health professionals rather than a purely specialist area to which generalist health professionals just need to refer. In addition, the curriculum offers an opportunity for nurses and other health professional students to practise multidisciplinary skills in the 'classroom' before they embark on the clinical environment.

### What are the outcomes for academic staff from inclusion of the PCC4U learning resources in undergraduate curricula?

The School of Nursing and Midwifery at Monash University has had an active palliative care research team for more than five years. However, the lack of clear presence in the teaching activities of the nursing curricula failed to emphasise the value of evidence-based palliative care practice in our graduate education. This opportunity links research activities in the school with education of our students.

### What factors facilitated or impeded the inclusion and endorsement of PCC4U learning resources at individual, organisational and system levels?

At an individual level, the inclusion of the PCC4U resources in the curriculum was reliant on the enthusiasm, opportunism and commitment of academic staff with palliative care clinical experience and hindered by students' misunderstanding of the purpose of

palliative care. Many students assumed that palliative care was just about 'old people'. Palliative care in mainstream curriculum will go some way to validating it as an important and specialised area of practice. At an organisation and system level, it was impossible to timetable classes to meet the learning needs of students across courses and campuses without a flexible delivery model. Curriculum development for flexible delivery across multiple campuses and courses is an expensive exercise in both staff time and resources. The financial resources provided by the continuing education program have enabled the development for our award courses to occur simultaneously, and will provide the framework for evaluation of the quality of the program.

### Further information

If you are interested in obtaining further information about the PCC4U project, please visit our website at [www.pcc4u.org](http://www.pcc4u.org) or contact a member of the Project Team by general email [mupccp@qut.edu.au](mailto:mupccp@qut.edu.au) Alison Farrington at [alison.farrington@qut.edu.au](mailto:alison.farrington@qut.edu.au) David Emmett at [d.emmett@qut.edu.au](mailto:d.emmett@qut.edu.au)