



Welcome to the first newsletter for the **Palliative Care Curriculum for Undergraduates Project (PCC4U)**. The PCC4U project aims to promote and support the inclusion of palliative care education as an integral part of all medical, nursing, and allied health undergraduate training, and ongoing professional development. The following activities have been the focus of work to date:

- \* Scoping Survey;
- \* Palliative Care Community Survey; and
- \* Preparation of a draft core principles document to guide focus group discussions scheduled for early 2004 across the country.

### **Project Overview**

The Palliative Care Curriculum for Undergraduates Project is part of the Department of Health and Ageing's National Palliative Care Strategy. The project aims to address one of the three key goals outlined in the strategy:

*"to improve community and professional awareness and understanding of and professional commitment to the role of palliative care needs of people who are dying and their families"* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000).

The project team is a consortium comprising representatives from Queensland University of Technology, Centre for Palliative Care Research and Education, Flinders University and the Northern Territory University.

A Project Advisory Group has been established with members comprising of representatives from the disciplines of nursing, medicine, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, social work and pharmacy.

The project comprises three major components:

#### \* **Component One**

This component involves extensive stakeholder consultation to identify and describe issues and practice in undergraduate palliative care education for health and allied health professions.

The finalisation and endorsement of the core principles document by key stakeholders across all relevant disciplines.

#### \* **Component Two**

This component involves the development of a set of educational resources for undergraduate courses that reflect the content of the core principles document.

#### \* **Component Three**

This component involves promoting the uptake of the finalised core principles document and associated resources within the tertiary education sector.

This project runs until the end of 2004. For further information, please log onto [www.pcc4u.org](http://www.pcc4u.org).

# The Study so Far

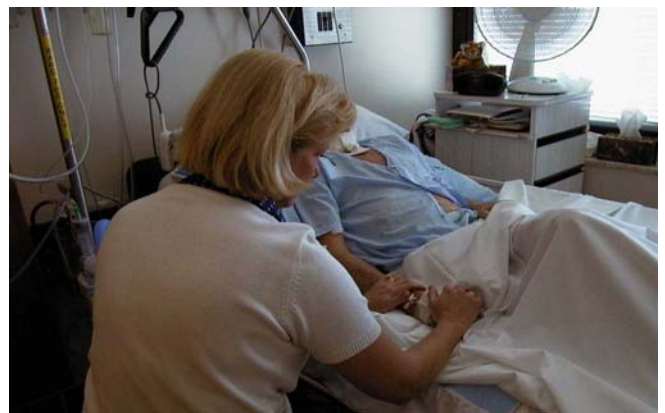
The project is still in its early stages but as data starts to flow in it is a very exciting time for the project team. Below are updates on the tasks to date.

## Scoping Survey

A scoping survey was sent out to all Deans of Faculties in Australian higher education institutions that offered undergraduate courses in the health professions to identify the extent to which current undergraduate curricula incorporates palliative care. Responses were received from 23 Universities representing disciplines and courses from nursing, medicine, allied health and complementary care. Preliminary analysis indicates that:

- The majority of current curriculum included palliative care components to some degree even though the term "palliative care" may not have been the organising concept;
- The mode of delivery of palliative care topics ranged from core units, integration with other subjects and electives, with the most common delivery option being integration. The most common reason given for integration was to create balance in an already overcrowded curriculum.
- A number of palliative care topics were common across all discipline areas, these included spirituality, care of patient/family, quality of life, the multidisciplinary team, loss and grief, death, dying and bereavement. The different discipline areas then had specific topics.
- The resources most identified as being the most useful in the teaching of palliative care were: practical experience /clinical placement in palliative care setting; role playing/skills workshop; and guest speakers.

- The current gaps/barriers to inclusion of palliative care in undergraduate curricula are similar to those identified in the literature. These are the curricula being seen as already crowded, a lack of practical placements in palliative care settings, managing competing demands from other discipline areas and insufficient palliative care teachers/clinicians.
- The opportunities identified predominantly included integration of key topics within existing subjects and course mapping against an ideal palliative care curriculum.



## Palliative Care Community Survey

This survey was sent to a purposively selected sample of Palliative Care Services, Allied Health Practitioners, Directors of Medical, Nursing and Allied Health at all training hospitals in Australia, Complementary Practitioners, relevant specialist training programs, Professional Nursing Organisations, University Departments of Rural Health and University Departments of Indigenous Health. The primary aim of the survey is to identify core values, principles and graduate attributes that are identified by this group as desirable for guiding the development of a multidisciplinary undergraduate curriculum in palliative care.

- 656 surveys were distributed with 226 responses received to date.

Data entry and coding of open ended questions has commenced.

# PCC4UPalliative Care Curriculum for Undergraduates

## An Invitation

The PCC4U project funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing aims to promote and support the inclusion of palliative care education as an integral part of all medical, nursing, and allied health undergraduate training, and ongoing professional development.

For further information about the project, please log onto [www.pcc4u.org](http://www.pcc4u.org).

**Queensland University of Technology**  
School of Nursing  
Victoria Park Rd  
Kelvin Grove  
QLD 4059

Phone: (07) 3864 3389  
Fax: (07) 3864 5941  
Email: [muccp@qut.edu.au](mailto:muccp@qut.edu.au)

## Please join us

- In an opportunity to provide input into the development and implementation of an undergraduate curriculum inclusive of palliative care.
- Focus groups are being held across Australia to obtain information from the clinical and academic community about:
  - What is important for undergraduates to know; and
  - How best to include this.
- Your involvement in these groups is crucial and we invite you to register your interest in attending one of these groups.

### **MELBOURNE: WEDNESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

Two session times: 2.00 – 4.00pm or  
6.00 – 8.30pm

### **MELBOURNE: THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

Two session times: 10.00 – 12.00am or  
2.00 – 4.00pm

### **HOBART: FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

Two sessions times: 9.00 – 11.00am or  
1.00– 3.00pm

Dates for Adelaide, Perth, Canberra, Northern Territory and Queensland are yet to be determined but will be posted on our website at [www.pcc4u.org](http://www.pcc4u.org).

### **CONTACT PERSON: Ms Debbie Parker**

**Phone: 07 3864 3840**

**Email: [d.parker@qut.edu.au](mailto:d.parker@qut.edu.au)**