

Hello and welcome to the second newsletter for the **Palliative Care Curriculum for Undergraduates Project (PCC4U)**. The PCC4U project funded by the Australian Government 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.

Project Update

Work on the project is moving full steam ahead. The following activities have been the focus of work to date:

- * Fostering broad consultation with key stakeholders through teleconferences with members of the Project Advisory Group, focus group discussions, individual interviews, and networking with representatives from other workforce related projects funded under the National Palliative Care Program;
- * Undergraduate Curricula Scoping Survey;
- * Palliative Care Community Survey;
- * Undertaking an integrative literature review;
- * Development of a Discussion Guide for Focus Group Participants; and
- * Conducting 16 Focus Group Discussions across the country.

The Project Advisory Group (PAG) includes representatives from the Australian Physiotherapy Association; the Society of Hospital Pharmacists; Cancer Nurses Society of Australia; Pastoral Care; Royal College of Nursing; National Office of Palliative Care; National Rural Health Alliance; Occupational Therapy; Australian and New Zealand Society for Palliative Medicine; Dietitians Association of Australia; Indigenous Health Workers; and the Australian Psychological Society.

Three teleconferences have been held to date and a face to face meeting with the PAG is planned for Tuesday 15th June, 2004.



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION - MELBOURNE

Focus Group Discussions

Patsy Yates, Dawn Morris and Carol Grbich have been travelling across the country meeting with health professionals to discuss in detail how we can support the inclusion of palliative care in undergraduate curricula for all health disciplines.

To date sixteen focus group discussions have been held in Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney, Brisbane, Albury-Wodonga and Adelaide. Further groups are planned for Perth, Townsville and Darwin. A total of 108 health professionals have attended to date with good representation from all disciplines.

A discussion guide (*available on the project website under Key Documents*) which provided a draft list of Graduate Capabilities was used to stimulate discussion. Data is currently being analysed and a report of the key themes arising from the discussion will be provided in our next newsletter.

For information on focus groups contact:
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PATSY YATES AND LINDA GODDARD - ALBURY

Palliative Care Community Survey

The primary aim of the survey was to identify core values, principles and graduate attributes as identified by the palliative care community as desirable for guiding the development of a multidisciplinary undergraduate curriculum in palliative care. A total of 710 surveys were distributed with 249 of these being returned. This represents a response rate of 36%. The largest group of respondents represented nursing (50.2%) followed by allied health (26.1%), medicine (21.7%) and complementary therapies (2%).

Respondents identified a range of topics which they believed should be included in an undergraduate palliative care curriculum. These topics included communication, management of pain, psychological aspects of death and dying, identification of common symptoms and caregiver and family needs.

Learning strategies that were believed by respondents to be most effective for palliative care education were clinical experience, case studies, tutorials, workshops and problem based learning. Qualities and skills that were deemed important to enable graduates to provide a palliative approach to care were empathy, compassion, a non-judgemental attitude, communication skills, a broad range of clinical skills and an appreciation of the values and philosophy of palliative care.

Barriers that were identified to the inclusion of palliative care within curricula included an already overcrowded curriculum, a lack of understanding

of palliative care, stigma and fear of being involved with death and dying, limited clinical placements and lack of a cohesive teaching approach across disciplines. Some suggested strategies to overcome these issues included limited but often exposure to palliative care across the curricula, promoting palliative care as a topic that is rewarding and interesting, offering clinical placements, providing a multidisciplinary teaching approach to palliative care and use of experienced palliative care lecturers.

A copy of the survey can be found on the project website under Key Documents.

Coming Up Soon

May

- The Project Team will meet in Adelaide to commence planning for Component Two of the project. This second component will focus on development of educational resources.
- A Plenary session "*Laying the Foundations*" is scheduled to be held at the 2nd National Palliative Care Education Conference at the University of Adelaide on the 13th & 14th May.

June

- Project Advisory Group meeting in Brisbane.

Later in the year

- Piloting of educational resources will commence. Please contact Debbie Parker if you would like to be involved in trialling these resources.

National Consultative and Information Sharing Network

We would like to invite you to register on our project website to receive updates regarding the project and reminder notices regarding the PCC4U project activities. By registering for our National Consultative and Information Sharing Network, you will also have additional opportunities to have input at various key stages of the project.

Simply go to the "Keep in Touch" section of the project website: www.pcc4u.org to register your interest.