



Welcome to the third newsletter for the Palliative Care for Undergraduates Project (PCC4U).



The project in brief

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 outcomes of this project will include the development of a set of educational resources for undergraduate courses and the identification of strategies to encourage the uptake of palliative care principles and associated resources within the tertiary education sector.

The project is an initiative of the Australian Government and is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing through the National Palliative Care Program.

TO COMMENT OR TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.pcc4u.org OR PHONE MS DEBBIE PARKER, PROJECT MANAGER ON (07) 3864 3840.

Project overview

There are three major components to the project. The first focused on gathering data through research and consultation with key stakeholders to identify and describe issues and practice in undergraduate palliative care education for health professionals. This formed the basis of a draft set of principles for including palliative care in undergraduate curricula—these principles outline the core values, desirable graduate capabilities and principles for teaching and learning palliative care in undergraduate courses in the health professions.

The second component of the project facilitates the development of a set of educational resources for undergraduate

courses that will complement and demonstrate the application of the core principles for inclusion of palliative care in undergraduate education in the health professions.

The final component focuses on promoting the uptake of the principles and educational resources developed as part of the second component of this project within the tertiary education sector.

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

Project activities	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrative review of literature on issues and practice in palliative care education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teleconferences with members of the Project Advisory Group and Project Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate curricula scoping survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palliative care community survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting 20 focus group discussions across the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a draft set of principles for including palliative care in undergraduate education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invitation to Comment – the draft principles document is distributed to key stakeholders and placed on the project website for comment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be available for comment early October
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalisation of the core principles document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be completed after stakeholder feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and piloting of educational resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of final resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be finalised after development and piloting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrative review of literature on strategies for facilitating uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesising data collected from components one and two concerning uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalisation of uptake strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be finalised after synthesis of uptake data

Project promotes nationwide consultation



A major aim of this project is to promote widespread national consultation with a variety of stakeholders and interested parties. This has been achieved through the establishment of a National Consultative and Information Sharing Network via the project website (www.pcc4u.org), to promote dialogue between the project team and stakeholders, and to provide opportunities for consultation and feedback via email.

A Project Advisory Group comprising representatives from peak bodies and associations has also been established. The Project Advisory Group provides feedback and advice from the perspective of providers of palliative care services and palliative care education. The Group also provides an important link for communication and promoting the participation of a wider range of health professionals and educators in all aspects of the project.

Update on project and activities

Focus groups a success

Twenty focus group discussions have been held with health professionals from nursing, medicine and allied health clinicians and academics across Australia to discuss a draft list of Graduate Capabilities. A total of 132 health professionals attended from nursing, medicine and allied health clinical staff, clinical educators and academics.

The discussions focused on 'what' the project should be trying to achieve for undergraduate capabilities in the area of palliative care and 'how' this could be achieved. Some of the emerging themes from the transcripts are:

- establish realistic expectations of undergraduate capabilities in the area of palliative care
- the need to demonstrate effective communication skills in the context of disease progression and the transition to palliative care
- provide reflective opportunities for students to determine their own values and beliefs about death and dying

- ensure resource development reflects the patient-centred approach to providing care and demonstrates an appreciation for the socio-cultural context
- curriculum should depict the diversity in illness trajectories
- undergraduate courses in the health professions should aim to develop graduates with an appreciation that the goals of both the person and health professionals can change throughout the progression of an illness and the need therefore to ensure ongoing assessment and the ability to sensitively respond to changing needs.

Draft of core principles completed

The draft 'Principles for Inclusion of Palliative Care in Undergraduate Curricula' has been developed from the extensive research and consultation undertaken in Component One of this project. The draft principles document will be available on the project website at www.pcc4u.org under the 'Key Documents' section by early October. We invite general comment from all interested parties by the end of October.



Educational resource development underway

Work is currently underway regarding educational resource development. It is proposed that a series of interactive CD-ROM resources will be designed. These resources will include scenarios around which learning activities will be organised to facilitate the exploration of core and discipline-specific competencies and learning requirements. Resource development will incorporate extensive focus testing throughout all phases to enhance the quality and relevance of the final products.

Next steps

Work has commenced on Component Three of the project—identifying strategies to facilitate uptake of the principles and resources developed as part of this project. This stage of the project will involve a series of workshops with academic personnel and representatives from relevant regulatory bodies to be held across Australia to develop recommendations regarding uptake strategies. Keep an eye out for further information about these events.

