

AHWI News October 2009

Towards a Sustainable Workforce

The Institute has taken decisive steps in the previous months towards building a Sustainable Health Workforce in Australia.

A Question of Sustainability

The problem of a looming crisis in health workforce was highlighted in the previous issue. The imbalance between the existing skills, levels and capacity of the Australian health workforce and the tremendous demands placed on it were highlighted. In this issue, I would like to address a more positive, problem-solving approach of health workforce sustainability

The workforce is stretched to capacity and there are a number of simple policy measures that would immediately alleviate burdens on the system. Such things are spending more money on preventative health measures than continuing to focus on the treatment of illness. Encouraging programs that teach young people to be responsible for their own health, ensure they follow a sensible diet and include exercise in their daily regimes is one such simple measure. These small interventions can have a lasting and sustained impact on how the health system operates.

Workshop on Creating A Sustainable Health Workforce

AHWI ran a series of invitation-only workshops in October and November 2009 and January and February 2010 with an aim of generating ideas and improvements in approaches to the way the health system in Australia operates. The workshops will draw together leaders from academia, government and industry to explore the big picture issues and questions of health workforce planning. The theme of these workshops is to address the question of 'sustainability', a timely and important concept that not only applies to questions of health but broader questions about Australian society. AHWI is dedicated to working towards a sustainable health workforce by 2020; we look forward to providing an important arena to explore these ideas.



*Prof. Peter Brooks
Interim Director
AHWI*

*Small Interventions can
have a lasting and
sustained impact on
how the health system
operates'*

Peter Brooks
Director
AHWI

AHWI Competition: Get Your Ideas Published!



Do you have a recommendation for improving the Australian Health Workforce?

Beginning in October 2009, AHWI will be running a bi-monthly competition online. The competition is posted on the AHWI website: www.ahwi.edu.au. We are looking for your ideas on a improving the Australian health workforce. The best idea will be published in a leading professional journal. The process is simple:

- Visit the AHWI website
- Click on 'Connect' and 'Ideas Competition'
- Add your idea on the Australian health workforce

The winner of each competition as judged by an independent panel will be posted on the AHWI website and published online. Get typing!

Inside AHWI: Dr. Lucio Naccarella

The Australian Health Workforce Institute is interested in a range of research related activities.

Dr. Lucio Naccarella is AHWI's Senior Research Fellow, and also a Policy Analyst with General Practice Victoria. He is a leading primary health care services researcher and evaluator, with interests in systems change, multidisciplinary primary health care team work, primary care organizations and primary medical care workforce reforms, from a policy, research and practice perspective.

Dr Naccarella's AHWI primary medical care workforce research program is driven by the need to strengthen and facilitate the conduct and uptake of evidence underpinning policy and practice. To date he has obtained competitive grants focussed on workforce practice models and practice drivers, including: exploring people with cancer perceptions of the role of the primary care generalist within multidisciplinary team care; incentives for primary health care team service provision; and on optimising Australia's primary care workforce reforms via primary care organisations. He also obtained International Visiting Fellowship Program grants for Professor Debra Humphris (University of Southampton, UK); and Professor James Buchan, (Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, UK).



His future research program focuses on: exploring workforce planning within Australian primary health care; developing a PHC workforce performance framework; and evaluating interprofessional education team based models.

With the Commonwealth governments focus on strengthening Australia's PHC workforce, research that informs policy implementation is crucial. If you are interested in conducting primary medical care workforce research, please contact: Dr Naccarella at: l.naccarella@unimelb.edu.au

Institute Activities



AHWI was fortunate to be able to host an important series of workshops, round table discussions and lectures with Prof. Deb Humphris (University of Southampton, UK) over the period August 3 – 7, 2009. Overall Professor Humphris visit challenged participants in her roundtable discussions and lectures, particularly university-based educators and researchers to take up the opportunity to ensure that Australia is preparing its future PHC workforce to learn and work together to deliver multidisciplinary team-based care. Prof. Humphris presentation can be accessed from:

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<http://www.ahwi.edu.au/home>

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Photo: (From left to right)

Dr. Lucio Naccarella (AHWI),
 Prof. Doris Young (University
 of Melbourne)
 Prof. Debra Humphris
 (University of Southampton),
 Prof. Jane Gunn (UoM)
 Prof. Terry Nolan (UoM)
 Prof. James Best (UoM)

About AHWI:

The Institute's aim is to deliver health workforce sustainability in Australia by 2020