Registrar Liaison Officer (RLO) update

It’s that time of the year for mixed emotions. Some registrars have recently found out they have passed all required examinations. Others have not been so lucky. Some registrars are studying hard and stressing about upcoming exams, and others are well on their way through their first term, blissfully unaware of the impending assessments.

Your regional staff are probably informing you about this already, but if you are planning on entering a GP term next, please make sure your provider number paperwork is submitted! It is very easy to get focused on the contract, but the provider number is just as, if not more, important.

Regarding contracts, there is a fantastic negotiating resource called the GPRA Benchmarking Survey. Rumour has it there will be another one coming very soon, so please keep your email spam filter off your GPRA emails. I say this every chance I get, but please join GPRA if you are not already a member. Membership is free, and we are the peak voice for GP registrars with regards to NTCER, employment, policy and educational matters.

If you have never been to a GP conference, I’d recommend coming along to GP17 or RMA17. They are a great way to reinvigorate your passion for medicine, general practice and rural medicine. There’s always a chance to network with other registrars, and the fellows love to see registrars are getting involved and are caring about the future of general practice.

So regardless of whether you are celebrating or ruminating, cramming or just cruising, it is important to stop and take stock of what really matters in life. For us all, fellowship training is just a small hurdle in our academic, professional and personal lives. We all take different pathways to reach a similar goal, some longer and more stressful than others.

I would like to not end this on a sad note, but there have been far too many recent tragic deaths of our colleagues. General practice training has been historically safer for the mental health of doctors in training, but we all know that stress can potentially be overwhelming.

If you are in need of help, please talk to your RLO or your own GP.

Dr Bob Vickers | Registrar Liaison Officer

Doctor wellbeing resources

The General Practice Registrars Association (GPRA) provides a number of resources to help GP registrars look after themselves and their wellbeing including a well-being checklist, GP wellbeing advice, fatigue management and workplace bullying.

The GPRA website also lists a number of support services available to doctors in need of support. This list can be found via the link: https://gpra.org.au/wellbeing/other-support-programs/

GP registrars can also contact their medical educator, rural support officer or RLO at any time.

Medicare provider number reminder

If you are a GP registrar going into a GP term in 2017:2 (Aug- Feb), make sure you check the letter you have received from Medicare advising of your provider number approval.

Please ensure you have been issued with a provider number with full billing rights before you commence billing patients. Registrars with refer and request rights will only be able to refer patients and request investigations for them, until a provider number with full billing rights is received.
Reconciliation Action Plan launch

On Wednesday 12 July we launched our 2017-2019 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The plan represents our desire and commitment to embrace the healing process of past inflicted pain, suffering, and hurt on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. It is a ‘bridge’ towards understanding and accepting what reconciliation means to us, individually and collectively; and what reconciliation means to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

GP Synergy’s vision is to work in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community towards reconciliation. Our intention is to enculturate values and practices that tackle the continuing state of inequity in the health and social opportunity of Indigenous Australia. We will ensure that our actions towards reconciliation are meaningful and result in demonstrably positive outcomes for the benefit of the community.

Development of the plan was led by our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Education Unit with input from GP Synergy staff, supervisors, registrars, practice staff and stakeholders. GP Synergy staff contributed to the RAP artwork under the direction of renowned Aboriginal artist Danny Eastwood. The artwork aims to be reflective of traditional styles of art across NSW and ACT Aboriginal communities and incorporates the earthy tones of ochre applied in traditional art works. Through symbolism we aimed to express a link between Indigenous Australian and western medicine.

The RAP launch coincided with the July Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committee meeting, with proceedings streamed to eight of our regional offices.

We hope our RAP serves as an invitation to all people and organisations to join us in achieving a deeper understanding of our cultural heritage, and a deeper level of care for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

To download a copy of our RAP click here.
National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week celebrations

Earlier this month it was NAIDOC Week, which celebrated the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities but by Australians from all walks of life, and many of our staff joined in NAIDOC activities within their local community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registrar dinner

The recent Fusion Registrar Workshop in Sydney provided the perfect opportunity for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registrars to catch up with each other and staff over dinner.

It was a great night and the start of more networking opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander registrars to come.

Congratulations to our Aboriginal Liaison Officer Val Dahlstrom!

Val (pictured centre) has been honoured for her contribution to Moree through inclusion on Moree Plains Shire Council’s Community Elders Honour Roll. The roll recognises local elders’ contributions to reconciliation and making Moree a better and more harmonious place.

Val is a proud Kamilaroi woman who has made Moree her home for over fifty years. She has been a tireless worker in the area of Aboriginal health including being instrumental in the establishment of Pius X Aboriginal Corporation, and as a member of the Review of Aboriginal Health Services that changed funding agreements and enabled more Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and the AH&MRC to be formed.

Registrars have positive in-practice experiences

Most registrars had positive in-practice training experiences, with a low 2-3% of registrars dissatisfied across the areas of quality of supervision; amount of supervision, teaching and support received; amount of feedback and feedback quality.

Registrars experiencing negative in-practice experiences are encouraged to discuss the issues with their supervisor or practice manager. If the issues are unable to be resolved, please talk to your Registrar Liaison Officer (RLO) or medical educator.

Registrars find the GP Synergy education program relevant and of high quality

Overall registrars find the GP Synergy program valuable, with a small percentage of registrars (3-4%) dissatisfied with their GP Synergy education program experience across the surveyed areas of quality of content, relevance, ability to provide feedback and overall experience.

Registrars are encouraged to complete the evaluation after every educational activity as this information is reviewed by local education teams in preparation for future programs.

Registrars find GP Synergy staff willing to help, with their best interests at heart, however there is still some room for improvement regarding access and responsiveness

Dissatisfaction rates (<5%) amongst registrars remained low across the areas of staff willingness to help, quality and amount of training advice, and feeling GP Synergy staff have registrar’s best interests at heart. There were slightly higher rates of dissatisfaction (<10%) with responsiveness, being able to access staff, and individualised support.

As part of our commitment to ongoing quality improvement, we will continue to review our systems and processes.

Overall, registrars are satisfied with their GP Synergy training experience

Most registrars have had positive experiences with GP Synergy, with 5% of registrars reporting dissatisfaction with GP Synergy overall (down from 7% in 2016.2). Encouragingly, 94% of registrars are likely to recommend GP Synergy as a training provider to some degree.

Registrars experiencing difficulty during their training are encouraged to contact us or their RLO. The GP Synergy Grievance Policy is also available for registrars at any time via GPRime under ‘Forms, Documents and Links’.

There are low levels of dissatisfaction with the term placement process

The term placement process was overall rated highly by registrars, with 5% experiencing dissatisfaction with the process.

Registrars who encounter difficulty with the process are encouraged to contact their education coordinator or medical educator for assistance.
Upcoming GP Synergy events

North Coast 2017:
- 22 July, Nambucca Heads OR 29 July, Ballina - Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander health make up days

Foundation and Regional Workshop 1:
- Western NSW Node 1: 7 Aug – 9 Aug, Dubbo
- Western NSW Node 2&3: 9 Aug – 11 Aug, Canberra
- North Eastern NSW Node 1: 9 Aug – 11 Aug, Coffs Harbour
- North Eastern NSW Node 2: Mon 7 – 9 Aug / 10 Aug VMO Day, Tamworth

Don’t forget 2017.2 education dates for registrars going into their first or second GP term are now available – just search ‘calendar’ under ‘Forms, Documents and Links’ or head to our website.

Exam preparation
- GP Synergy RACGP exam preparation workshops are now underway for registrars sitting the exams in 2017.2 only. Please email Shirleen Chand for further information: shirleen_chand@gpsynergy.com.au
- GP Synergy ACRRM assessment preparation workshops are currently underway. Please email Claire Doyle for further information: claire.doyle@gpsynergy.com.au

Key dates

17 July: Competency Assessment due for registrars in first, second and third GP terms and Extended Skills in GP*
6 Aug: End date term 1 2017
7 Aug: Start date term 2 2017
15 Sept: 2017.2 RACGP OSCE exam enrolment closes
18 Sept: 2018.1 RACGP AKT/KFP/OSCE enrolment opens
22 Jan: ACRRM 2018.1 assessment/s enrolment closes
4 Feb: End date term 2 2018

*These dates are indicative only and may vary if a registrar is part-time or commenced a GP term after the first week of term.

Upcoming activities of interest

- STEMI – ACLS | 29 July | Sydney | More information
- ACRRM - Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) | 5-6 August | Sydney | More information
- New England Division of General Practice - Aged care challenges - Assessment and referral - getting it right in the new system | 10 August | Armidale | More information
- BJC Health – JAM Session (Joint and musculo-skeletal pain) | 12 August | Sydney | More information
- NSW Health - Back pain workshop | 16 September | Orange | More information
- ACRRM - Advanced Life Support (ALS) | 24 September | Pokolbin | More information
- ACRRM - Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) | 7-8 October | Canberra | More information
- ACRRM - Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) | 25-26 November | Coffs Harbour | More information

For further information please see the External Education Activity Noticeboard

Queen’s Birthday honours

Congratulations to two of our GP Supervisors who have been recognised in the Queen’s Birthday 2017 Honours List!

Dr John Moran received a Member (AM) in the General Division for significant service to medicine in northern NSW, to medical administration and education, and to the community. Dr Moran has been a GP for 33 years in Murwillumbah.

Dr John Kramer of the Beach Street Medical Practice in Woolgoolga received a Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia in the General Division for service to medicine as a general practitioner in regional areas. Dr Kramer has been a GP in Woolgoolga since 1981.

If we have missed anyone, please let us know!
New paediatric advanced specialised training (AST) post in Orange

Orange Health Service is the first in NSW to be accredited to offer advanced specialised training in child and adolescent health to registrars training as general practitioners.

The long-term shortage of specialist paediatricians in many rural areas, makes the 12-month procedural training post as a unique opportunity for GP registrars to upskill in paediatrics.

Training GPs with additional procedural skills in child and adolescent health, will reduce some of the burden that rural families with unwell children often face in having to travel to seek treatment.

The first GP registrar to undertake the paediatrics post is Dr Erica Watson (pictured).

“Paediatrics is an area that as a GP I’ll see a lot of.

“Undertaking the post has provided experience that I can apply in general practice, particularly in more rural areas.

“Smaller district hospitals have opportunities for upskilled GPs and that’s the sort of general practice I want to be involved in,” Dr Watson said.

For more information about advanced skills posts, please contact Felicity Gemmell-Smith on felicity_gemmell-smith@gpsynergy.com.au

Dates for the diary: 2018.1
Registrar term placement

• 3 Oct: Re-enrolment opens for term 1 2018 (2018.1)
• 10 Oct: Re-enrolment closes for term 2 2018 (2018.1)
• 23 Oct: Registrars can start applying to practices in their allocated grouping

Further information about term placement for the 2018.1 term will be available shortly.