

THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2005

NEW FUNDING FOR HEALTH RESEARCH IN N.S.W.

Three Sydney researchers have won research grants to tackle issues of primary health care development in Australia, funded by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI), based at ANU.

Ms Julie McDonald and colleagues at the University of New South Wales will look into the development of comprehensive primary health care models.

As part of this work they will investigate the potential of computer modelling to test the impact of different aspects of the organisation of primary health care — for example the impact of changes in workforce, service organisation or population.

Her colleague, Mr Gawaine Powell Davies and co-workers will examine some of the problems that health services face with integration and co-ordination of care, including multidisciplinary care in primary health care. They will investigate how these problems arise, and the impact on this of different aspects of health service organisation — for example ownership, size and governance.

Professor Nicholas Zwar will look at how chronic disease is managed in general practice settings, an area identified as a key concern of Government.

The three groups will be collaborating with colleagues in Canada, the UK and New Zealand.

These projects are three of 12 around the nation funded by APHCRI in its second major funding round for 2005. Each of the 12 projects will be funded for 12 months with results expected in September next year. Funding in this round totalled \$1,724,200.

APHCRI was set up as part of a Federal Government strategy to improve the knowledge base in primary health care policy. This is the Institute's fourth funding round of research into primary health care.

APHCRI Director, Professor Nicholas Glasgow, said the Institute was taking an innovative approach to research. "APHCRI will bring policy makers and researchers together in the early stages of the their work to refine research questions and improve the collaboration between the two diverse groups," he said.

"This aims to make research more relevant to policy formulation in primary health care."

The new stream of research would be able to react quickly to relevant policy questions, with an end result of improving health care outcomes for Australians, he said.

APHCRI Research Advisory Board Chairman, Professor John Marley, congratulated the successful applicants.

"It's great to see so many researchers from all over Australia come together in this body of work. I look forward to seeing the results of their research and the development of APHCRI's approach, bringing the research and policy communities together."

Some other projects funded in this round include:

- A study of successful models of Aboriginal primary health care;
- An investigation into primary care interventions for parents of overweight children; and
- Research into whether care in other chronic disease areas, like diabetes, could be used as a model in mental health.