

MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2006

RESEARCH ON HEALTH WORKFORCE SHORTAGE BOOSTED

Strategies to solve Australia's medical workforce shortage will be the focus research undertaken around Australia over the next 12 months, thanks to grants from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI), based at ANU.

The research projects funded in this round will aim to inform policy on one of Australia's most pressing concerns – the medical workforce shortage, APHCRI Director, Professor Nicholas Glasgow, said.

"Medical workforce issues are not being solved in Australia. We're still reliant on importing doctors and that's not sustainable. We need to find genuine, evidence-based solutions to this crisis."

Nine projects in have been funded to the value of \$1.8 million for researchers at the University of Sydney, Monash University, the University of Melbourne, UNSW, the Australian College for Rural and Remote Medicine and Flinders University.

When providing grants APHCRI prioritises subject areas and invites researchers to tackle specific questions dealing directly with policy-relevant issues.

"In this Research Stream we have identified key areas where evidence for policy making is needed – making general practice a medical career of choice and how we best use the workforce we have," Professor Glasgow said.

The projects will include investigating issues of rural and remote health, indigenous health and mental health workforce issues. The emerging multi-disciplinary care approach to primary health care, including the practice nurse role will also be a focus of the research projects.

As part of the APHCRI funding program, researchers and policy advisers meet regularly to discuss the research as it developed, with the aim of improving take up of the research into policy.

The Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Projects funded in APHCRI Stream Six research program:

- A/Prof Jill Thistlethwaite, University of Sydney
Attracting health professionals into primary care: Strategies for recruitment and retention
- Prof John Humphreys , Monash University

ANU MEDIA OFFICE:

Jane O'Dwyer
T: (02) 6125 5001
M: 0416 249 231

Amanda Morgan
T: (02) 6125 5575
M: 0416 249 245

Simon Couper
T: (02) 6125 4171
M: 0416 249 241

Does ongoing education and training enhance workplace attractiveness and thereby improve retention of primary health workers practising in small rural and remote communities?

- Prof James Dunbar, Flinders University
A systematic review of the evidence on the contribution of organisational development to optimising the workforce in primary care
- Dr Grant Blashki, University of Melbourne
Optimising the Primary Mental Health Care Workforce in Australia
- Prof Jane Gunn, University of Melbourne
What is the place of generalism in the 2020 primary care team?
- Dr David Perkins, University of New South Wales, Sydney
What is the place of generalism in mental health care in Australia
- Prof Nicholas Zwar, University of New South Wales, Sydney
Optimising skill-mix in the primary health care workforce for the care of older Australians
- Prof Helen Keleher, Monash University
Primary and community care nurses: what policy frameworks, funding models and models of nurse education would support a sustainable primary care nursing workforce to meet the health care needs of the future
- A/Prof Dennis Pashen, Australian College for Rural and Remote Medicine
The expanding role of generalists in rural and remote health: A systematic review