What’s been happening in the Hunter and Coast ICTN?

Local Project Fund

Breaking Into New Territory - Paramedic Interprofessional Placement Project

Charles Sturt University is initiating novel and innovative partnerships with allied health and community based services to facilitate non-traditional educational placements for paramedic students. This project has an emphasis on establishing these placements within the Hunter and Coast region, with a view to expand the program state wide at a later date. These groundbreaking placements will complement the current clinical training partnership with the Ambulance Service of New South Wales (ASNSW) and will provide our students with critical skills, knowledge, empathy, and understanding that will lead to improved client care and foster collaborative interprofessional partnerships now and into the future.

Internationally and locally, paramedic practice has shifted in focus from predominantly emergency acute care to a more holistic primary care delivery model. Changes in the needs of the community, specifically an aging population, an increase in chronic illnesses, and a decrease in home visits from GPs, have resulted in paramedicine evolving to a wider, more involved community based approach encompassing preventative education, at-home treatments, and ongoing health maintenance, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Paramedics are well placed as the first point of contact for clients to fill service gaps in the health industry, proving to be adaptable, trusted, accessible, credible, skilled health workers. A number of pilot programs formalising the role of extended care paramedics (ECPs) operate successfully in Australia and around the globe; however, these programs focus on expanding the role of experienced paramedics rather than preparing paramedic students to working interprofessionally. Moving forward, we recognise paramedic student education and experience in community paramedicine will prove necessary and fundamental to aligning with international and national industry practice.

To this end, and with thanks to the NSW ICTN Local Project Fund, Charles Sturt University has a unique opportunity to formally provide an interprofessional learning experience for our paramedic students. The project team is building partnerships with organisations that provide services for Indigenous, aged care, mental health, child and youth, and chronic illness clients. Primary benefits to our students will include gaining valuable insight into the lives and needs of their potential future clients and developing an understanding of working interprofessionally. Additional benefits will include improved communication and interpersonal skills, expanded knowledge of regional services, and development of practical skills in diagnosis, assessment, intervention, and referral.
Preventing wastage in clinical placement uptake

University of Newcastle (UoN) was successful in securing Local Project Funding to build an interface between the University placement management system SONIA, and the Ministry of Health’s (MoH) ClinConnect, with the aim of maximising placement opportunities by engaging students during their verification process.

In 2012, the web based clinical placement tracking booking system, ClinConnect, went live, ready to manage students placement offers and bookings for 2013 onwards. An integral part of ClinConnect is tracking student verification. Any student attending placement in a MoH facility must meet verification requirements or be turned away from their placement facilities. This grant has allowed us to create a pathway for students to be able to clearly view their verification status, leading to a much higher uptake of functional placement opportunities. Nationally, 15 institutes including the UoN, use an internal placement system called SONIA (http://www.sonia.com.au). SONIA is an interactive database that allows university staff and students to keep track of placements, prerequisites and preferences. Through the support of HETI, we have been able to discover a way in which SONIA can further engage with students by clearly communicating the status of their verification process.

The purpose of this grant project was to create a facility allowing EPs to upload ClinConnect Student Verification Report data into SONIA. Student verification status will then be set as a Mandatory Check, encouraging future student participation in verification processes, but more importantly significantly maximising clinical placement opportunities across MoH facilities.

Through working closely with Hunter New England Local Health District representatives, UoN placement officers and HETI, the project has been very successful and response has been incredibly positive. This pathway will be rolled out over the coming months to all institutes utilising SONIA as their placement management system.
What’s been happening in ICTNs across NSW?

**CSSP 2013 Regional Masterclasses**

The CSSP Masterclass Series has been touring the NSW regional centres during April and May, delivering clinical supervision training at the local level.

The regional Masterclasses were supported by South Coast, Hunter and Coast, Western and Riverina ICTNs with events in Wollongong, Newcastle, Ballina, Dubbo and Wagga. The Masterclasses featured three presenters in the morning and an interactive workshop with Professor Stewart Dunn in the afternoon.

The series has been well received, with over 400 participants attending from across the professions representing public, private and not for profit organisations. With the theme “Conversations that change”, the focus of the Masterclasses was on communication covering topics such as intergenerational challenges, wholeheartedness in supervision and exploration of the psychodynamics of communication.

Feedback from participants has been very positive, with comments like “a wonderful day that took my theoretical knowledge to another level and gave me some practical skills” and “a lot of food for thought, very powerful sharing of information and ideas”.

The Sydney and Penrith Masterclasses in June are already fully booked. If you missed out or want to revisit the highlights, webcasts of speakers’ presentations are now available on the HETI website - [heti.nsw.gov.au/courses/cssp-masterclass-series/webcasts/](http://heti.nsw.gov.au/courses/cssp-masterclass-series/webcasts/).
ICTN Statewide Forum

The inaugural ICTN Statewide Disciplines Forum, held in Sydney on 23 April 2013, identified issues and formulated possible solutions to improve clinical placement and training in NSW. A total of 81 Nursing/Midwifery, Medicine and Allied Health representatives from all NSW ICTN Advisory Committees participated in the forum.

Participants discussed the following statewide priorities for clinical training in NSW:
- workload and competing priorities
- collaboration and coordination
- new and expanding settings
- culture
- supervision
- infrastructure

Participants worked in discipline-specific groups to select priority areas most relevant to their discipline; identify challenges faced by their discipline in this area; and formulate potential strategies to address these challenges.

Group discussions brought out a number of common interdisciplinary themes:
- importance of fostering a culture that supports clinical training and supervision
- ensuring the quality of clinical placements
- need for data collection/mapping
- expansion of administration systems for recording and sharing of clinical placement data
- uncertainty of funding

The forum concluded with participants identifying possible action plans to improve clinical placement and training in NSW. Everyone was encouraged to review forum discussions in their local ICTNs and implement strategies relevant to their networks.

The Forum fact pack and agenda can be downloaded from heti.nsw.gov.au/ictn/statewide/forum/

HWA Publication

HWA has published a report entitled “A Framework for Effective Clinical Placements in Rural and Remote Primary Care Settings” as part of the final stage of the Research Collaboration by the Australian Health Workforce Institute.

The report presents key requirements for effective clinical placements in rural and remote primary care settings and how these could be adapted to and are transferable to other settings.

The framework for effective clinical placements in rural and remote primary care named the Clinical Learning Environments Evaluation Framework (CLEEF), features nine essential elements for effective placement: an organisational culture that values learning, effective clinical practice, a positive learning environment, a supportive health-service training provider relationship, effective communication, appropriate resources and facilities, effective inter-professional learning, a safe working environment and quality supervision.

The findings of the report will assist both universities and placement providers to deliver high quality rural and remote clinical placements for students.


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CSSP National Clinical Supervision Skills Initiative

HWA’s Clinical Supervision Support Program (CSSP) is developing a National Clinical Supervision Skills Initiative (Skills Initiative) that will deliver a range of interprofessional clinical supervision education and training opportunities for new and existing clinical supervisors across Australia, facilitated by the ICTNs.

The National Clinical Supervision Competency Resource (the Resource) provides the foundation for the Skills Initiative by enabling the development of a consistent, transparent approach to provide quality interprofessional clinical supervision education and training.

To support the Skills Initiative, HWA is establishing a Multi Use List (MUL) of Education and Training Providers (Providers) with proven experience in the delivery of interprofessional clinical supervision education and training who can demonstrate alignment to the Resource.

The Resource can be accessed at


For more information and to register your interest in the MUL or to complete a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI), please go to


The REOI closes at 4pm ACST Friday 21 June 2013.