At the start of another academic year it’s worth reflecting on how we’re going. Our funding under the “Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program” (which includes the Rural Clinical School program) is referred to as a workforce program, with clear objectives around improving the rural medical workforce. After 12 years, what does our balance sheet look like?

On the positive side of the ledger we have a number of our graduates now completing their GP training and about to join local practices. We have one or two of our alumni who have returned to the region to undertake short clinical placements as part of training in other specialties. Others have settled in different parts of rural Australia and others are still on their rural career journeys. The School of Rural Health is this year undertaking a project to get an accurate picture of the career choices of our graduates.

In addition, our clinical year programs are still popular with both graduate-entry and undergraduate students. The feedback from students who spend a year or more with us is very positive, our pass-rates approach 100%, and we have increasing numbers of students applying for final year clinical placements in our region. We have now well-established partnerships with the practices, hospitals, doctors and other clinicians who supervise and teach our students.

On the other side of the ledger, there is still work to be done. Not enough local secondary school students are applying for and being accepted into medical school. We have had only one member of the local Aboriginal community graduate through our program. As a regional unit within the School of Rural Health, we have placed a strong emphasis on community engagement as part of our brief to contribute to the local medical workforce. This engagement has many facets, including working with local secondary schools to identify and support students interested in medical careers, setting up mentor arrangements, encouraging our medical students to conduct community projects, recruiting community members to assist with our curriculum delivery, and quantifying and consolidating our contribution to the commercial and social capital of the community. At the other end of the “pipeline”, we have been working with other medical and health training bodies and institutions to ensure local availability of career training pathways. These are long-term objectives which rely on continuity and stability of staffing arrangements, consistent commitment to strategic direction and a sustainable funding base.

Ultimately, we should be judged by our community as to whether we are making a difference.

David Campbell
Director
Simulated Learning Environment in BRHS Operating Theatre

A Malignant Hyperthermia scenario was conducted in the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service (BRHS) Operating Theatre on Tuesday October 28, 2014.

The scenario presented an opportunity to collaborate a multi-disciplinary team approach to the diagnosis and treatment of the life threatening condition known as malignant hyperthermia.

The scenario was organised with consultation between Sian Guns the NUM theatre, Dr David McConville, Dr Daryl Smith, Kim Cantrill, Nurse Educators’ & the SLE project Officer. The preparation phase was conducted over a seven month time frame to incorporate the staff roster, theatre utilisation time, operational logistics and the revised Malignant Hyperthermia policy (MH).

The interprofessional scenario was well attended by 26 staff and SimMan 3 G had his first visit to theatre for a hernia repair (complicated by a bowel obstruction). The surgical team involved were Mr Servaise DeKock, Mr Lee Van Schoor, Ally Smith and Helen Petersen.

A pause and discuss methodology of debrief was employed for the session, post the diagnosis of MH. This provided a question and answer time for the participants and a change of anaesthetists to engage the team further in the immersive simulation scenario.

A scribe role was identified as imperative to the exercise and three staff members were allocated to mixing the dantrolene.

Team work and the use of non-technical skills in the theatre environment were utilised to treat the medical emergency of malignant hyperthermia. The feedback was positive regarding the scenario, team work and the activation of the malignant hyperthermia policy. The MH policy was reviewed in correlation with the scenario and the task cards were refined post the exercise.

Research Report

Conferences

The School of Rural Health East and South Gippsland, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences are associated with the following conferences:

- The 13th WONCA World Rural Health Conference will be held in Dubrovnik April 15-18, 2015. A/Prof David Campbell is attending and presenting on Rural medicine as a distinct discipline - developments in Australia.
- The 13th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Darwin from May 24-27, 2015. Several representatives from our School will be attending, with Marnie Connolly presenting on Innovative professional development for Primary Care nurses – a rural paradigm and Angelo D’Amore speaking on Rural research capacity building: A 5 year case study.

Publications

Director of the school David Campbell along with colleagues I. Shepherd, M. McGrail, L. Kassell, Marnie Connolly, B. Williams and D. Nestel published a study on March 19, 2015, on procedural skills and training needs of doctors, nurses, midwives and paramedics in rural Victoria.

The paper reports on a research project conducted in Gippsland, Victoria, to ascertain the frequency of use, and relevance to clinical practice, of a range of skills in the fields of medicine, nursing, midwifery, and paramedic practice. The project also gathered data on the attitudes of clinicians regarding how frequently and by what means they thought they needed to practice these skills with a particular focus on the use of simulation as an educational method.

A full copy of the published article can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/fcckgm

Eleanor Mitchell

Gippsland/East Gippsland Education Trust

Monash University School of Rural Health East & South Gippsland, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Sale and the Shires of Wellington and East Gippsland, established the “Gippsland/East Gippsland Education Trust” in 2010. The Trust provides a once off bursary of $5,000.00 to local students (having lived in either of the Shires for a minimum of 5 years) who received and accepted an offer to study a Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) at Monash University. The bursary is to assist with relocation to Melbourne and the purchase of curriculum text books.

This year the successful applicant is Ms Dayle Howlett, a Rosedale resident who attended Primary School in Rosedale and secondary studies at Sale Secondary College. Dayle will be commencing her tertiary studies at Monash Clayton this year and is thrilled to have been selected as the Scholarship recipient with the bursary greatly assisting her with accommodation expenses and in the purchase of her text books.

As part of the application process Dayle had to provide a statement outlining her understanding of health issues in rural and regional Victoria. Dayle’s application reflected a mature understanding of health issues being faced in the region and a desire to return and address these eventually as a qualified practitioner.

Past recipients of the Trust are: Caroline Severs – Bairnsdale; Sinead Phillips-O’Kenny –Yarram; Meg Gallagher -Swifts Creek; and Emily Mogridge – Sale.

Staff Welcomes

In January, 2015 Donna Reed who was previously employed as a casual administration assistant joined the SRH administration team as a permanent part-time employee.

Joining Donna in February, 2015 is Karen Cox. Karen joined the administration team after the departure of long term employee Ros Pearce. Karen brings with her a wealth of administration and management skills from the finance and media industries, and looks forward to utilising her knowledge and skills at the SRH.

Karen is employed as a casual administration assistant based at the Bairnsdale site.
Student News

Welcomes

East and South Gippsland School of Rural Health operates a three site school in Bairnsdale, Sale and Leongatha. Attended by local medical clinic staff and hospital staff, our welcome events give us the opportunity to introduce the students to those involved in delivering all aspects of their curriculum throughout the academic year.

Year 3B and 4C Sale

The seven Year 3B MBBS students have settled into their year at Central Gippsland Health Service and Bairnsdale Regional Health Service. After a busy two week orientation in February, the students are participating in clinical bedside tutorials, Medical and Surgical ward placements, Theatre and Emergency department rotations, Problem Based Learning cases, Clinical skills sessions and sessions in the Consulting rooms. Many activities in Year 3B are self-directed and students are based in the clinical environment to integrate their knowledge and skills in medicine and surgery. With each rotation the students gain confidence in their abilities. The staff at both hospitals are very supportive of the program and have already spent a full year in clinical placement in a hospital environment. Students gain their clinical experience in the local and regional hospitals and in specialist outpatient departments. In most circumstances, students are placed in general practices in pairs for the academic year to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

Through the Gippsland Rural Integrated Community Curriculum Program, the eight Sale students are placed in and around the Sale district with two being placed at Clocktower Medical Centre, Heyfield Medical Centre, Maffra Medical Group and Sale Medical Centre. The ten Bairnsdale students are placed in and around the East Gippsland district with two being placed at Orbost, four in Lakes Entrance and four in Bairnsdale, with all ten students having the opportunity for placement in Omeo.

Year 4C Leongatha

The nine Year 4C students in South Gippsland are spread right across the region from Foster to Wonthaggi, and including Korumburra and Leongatha. The students have launched themselves enthusiastically into the integrated program, with several students already witnessing births in their local hospitals. They have a busy year ahead with clinicians from local practices plus a range of visiting specialists involved in the teaching program.

Important Dates for 2015

Placement Dates

Year 2 27 April – 8 May
7 September – 18 September

Semester Dates

Year 3B Semester 1
2 February – 5 June
Semester 2
29 June – 30 October

Year 4C Semester 1
9 February – 12 June
Semester 2
6 July – 6 November

Year 5D 27 January – 20 November

Examination Period

9 November – 27 November (TBC)

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Student Profile

Jayson Leow,
Year 4C Bairnsdale, 2015

Having grown up in Melbourne all of my life, discovering that I’d be relocating to Lakes Entrance for the year definitely came as a surprise. I was greeted with exclamations of envy upon telling everyone that I would be living in the popular tourist town and I was inundated with suggestions of activities to try, sights to see and places to visit. All I was worried about was how I was going to juggle all these activities while attempting to get through what is arguably the toughest year of medical school.

My placement at Gippsland Lakes Community Health has been a very hands-on interactive introduction to General Practice and community health. I’m excited for the continuity this full-year placement offers, as we have the opportunity to be involved with and follow the progression of a patient’s care as well as learning more about who they are as a person, rather than just the disease or illness attached. Our mentoring GPs and supportive staff have all been amazingly friendly and inviting. Having our own consulting room at the GP practice provides us the opportunity to actually make clinical decisions and plans, which is a much more rewarding experience and helps to consolidate our textbook learning into practical applications.

The unique year-long integrated Year 4C curriculum offered here in East Gippsland affords us the ability to constantly enhance our knowledge in each of the four disciplines throughout the year, rather than condensing all our learning into pressured nine-week rotations. The relationships we will form with our GP mentors, tutors and other academic staff, as well as with each other within our tight-knit group will be integral to our personal enjoyment and academic success and this year.

Thanks!
SRH Activities

PNG TRAINING

The Practice Nurse Education Group has now been running successfully for 6 years and continues to grow, enabling many practice nurses to update their training and learn new skills in a simulated environment. Currently four education sessions are held each year. Sixteen practice nurses attended a session held on Tuesday, March 31 on pain management.

Moulage

A Moulage course is being held on April 30 at the Bairnsdale education centre. Moulage is the art of applying mock injuries on people and manikins (scars, burns, road rash, bruising, lacerations and trauma) and some tips and tricks when using Moulage.

New Zealand Exchange

East year there is an opportunity for two Year 4C students from the East and South Gippsland School of Rural Health, to undertake an exchange with two students from the University of Otago Rural Medical Immersion Program (RMIP). Students spend the two weeks alongside the RMIP students and are involved in all aspects of the program, also managing to fit in some sightseeing.

The 2015 program is running for the first two weeks of Semester two, July 6-17 inclusive.

Intern Training

Every ten weeks Intern training is conducted at the Bairnsdale site with a 2 hour emergency skill session covering topics of airway management, adult trauma, unwell child and medical emergency.

This year the community based interns have joined in with these sessions along with medical students undertaking placements in Bairnsdale.

School Visits

East and South Gippsland Medical students Year 3B and 4C’s will once again be participating in ‘Teddy Bear Hospital’, where Monash students visit Prep and year 1 students across primary schools in Bairnsdale, Sale and Leongatha as an introduction to hospital and clinical settings. The aim of Teddy Bear hospital and the Monash student’s visit is to help reduce the anxiety children may experience if they or someone close to them has to go to hospital.

Primary school students in Year 5 and 6 from primary schools in the Bairnsdale district will be visiting the Bairnsdale Monash Education Centre under the direction of Ms Marnie Connolly (Bairnsdale Simulation Suite Manager) and Ms Laurea Atkinson (Project Officer) for an introduction to Health Sciences.

Mildura Visit

After a successful visit of the Mildura team in 2014, Mildura academic staff visited SRH again on Monday, March 23. The visit gives staff at Mildura and East and South Gippsland the opportunity to discuss the many benefits and challenges faced by the geographical locals of our education centres. Discussions were held around student support, tutor supervisor support, simulation, Indigenous health and research opportunities.

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Unforgettable journey

Miriam Riverlea and baby Audrey Rose Wood-Ingram of Mallacoota, were reunited with community ambulance officers Catherine Pirrie and Rosemary Hine.

Mallacoota ambulance community officers (ACOs) Catherine Pirrie and Rosemary Hine had a callout they won’t soon forget, when a baby was born in their ambulance parked on the side of Mt Drummer, near Cann River, en route to Orbost hospital.

Whilst it was Miriam Riverlea’s third baby, it was not her first to be born in an ambulance. Baby Audrey Rose Wood-Ingram followed in the footsteps of her big brother Miles, who was also born in the back of an ambulance.

The ACO’s commented that delivering a healthy baby all came back to their simulated learning experience training at the Bairnsdale site of Monash University. Sponsored by the Mallacoota ladies auxiliary, they experienced the learning environment of birthing, where they are shown what could or might happen and how to deal with the situations.

The pair had a reunion with Miriam Riverlea, who gave birth to 3.7kg (8lb 3oz) bundle of joy Audrey Rose Wood-Ingram at 8.40pm on March 2. There were flowers, photos and cuddles all round as they relived Audrey’s speedy and somewhat dramatic entry into the world.

L/R Jenny Timmis, Marnie Connolly, David Campbell, Fiona Wright

Ingram followed in the footsteps of her big Ambulance Nurses and Rosemary Hine.

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