

Internal Memorandum

DATE: 3 December, 2014

TO: Associate Professor Alison Jones

FROM: Carmen Crawford and Ronda Bain

SUBJECT: 19th National Prevocational Medical Education Forum
Hosted by Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) in the Hunter Valley, NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the 19th National Prevocational Medical Education Forum, held from Sunday 9 November to Wednesday 12 November, 2014. Prevocational training matters remained at the heart of the Forum focus as attendees explored the Forum theme of Outcomes: Recipes for Success.

Purpose

To provide SA MET unit staff and others with reflections of the Prevocational Forum, which was held November 2014.

Background

- > The National Prevocational Medical Education Forum is an annual medical prevocational education forum, facilitated by the Confederation of Postgraduate Medical Education Councils (CMPEC).
- > The theme of the 2014 Forum was “*Outcomes: Recipes for Success*”.
- > Carmen Crawford, Online Services Coordinator, SA MET unit, delivered a presentation titled ‘Taking education, training and assessments online’. The presentation demonstrated how South Australia is delivering and managing education, training and assessment online.
- > Ronda Bain, Regional Training Manager, SA MET unit, presented a project undertaken within the unit titled ‘I feel like a doctor; experiences of junior doctors in emergency medical rotations in general practice and hospital settings in SA.’
- > Relevant take-home points are outlined below.

Overview

Across the three day conference there were presentations from junior doctors, national partners and from those who have an interest in the prevocational medical education space. There was a well-balanced mix of established educators, scholars, researchers, prevocational doctors and some respected leaders from industries outside of medicine. The opening keynote address from Dr Cliff Reid, “Making it happen” invited robust, respectful and engaged exchange among the participants and set the tone for the rest of the proceedings. The relatively intimate conference allowed for a seminar style discussion at each presentation.

Themes

Themes of the conference that resonated with South Australian attendees were:

- > Assessment of junior doctors.
- > Peer Support and mental health for junior doctors.
- > Cultural Awareness.
- > Increasing the flexibility and accessibility of information for junior doctors.
- > Flexible working arrangements for junior doctors.

Assessment of junior doctors

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) assessment form is being adopted nationally. There appears to be an eagerness to implement technology systems that will capture assessments. South Australia is a leader in this space. The SA MET unit Online Training and Information System (OTIS) provides a means for completing the AMC assessments online and delivering education.

Carmen Crawford, Online Service Coordinator, presented the OTIS system to a small audience of approximately 50 participants. At the conclusion of the presentation the audience participated in a question and answer session. The interest in the system was positive from participants of other states and territories. Participants expressed that the inclusion of the AMC assessment to an online education system was unique and valuable.

Peer Support and mental health for junior doctors

The mental wellbeing of junior doctors was a big topic of discussion. Themes ranged greatly and included:

- > Unsafe working hours and nightshift preparation.
- > Increasing workload.
- > Emotional and physical demands.
- > Career planning and guidance.

Different presentations suggested actions to assist the junior doctors to improve their mental wellbeing through supporting and preparing them for the junior doctor role. These included peer support, coaching and mentoring programs, and peer education programs. The SA MET Unit and a Medical Education Unit are in the process of implementing a pilot mentoring program. Ideas and information from the presentations, which were presented at the forum, will be included in the development of the program.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness training has been implemented in New South Wales over recent years. A framework and online training package, which is mandatory to all health staff, was presented with positive affirmation from the audience. The well-developed framework will be discussed with the South Australian Aboriginal Health Branch, with the aim of increasing cultural awareness and education in South Australia.

Increasing the flexibility and accessibility of information for junior doctors

It was evident that junior doctors are increasingly eager for readily available information, which is specific to processes within their clinical setting. Many have become so discouraged with the lack of easily accessible information; this has motivated them to create their own solutions. To overcome these challenges, junior doctors often looked to utilise technology, for example, web applications. In South Australia the SA MET unit's OTIS site could be utilised to present such information. To increase flexibility and accessibility, small developments could be made to the system. The system would require a responsive theme that will be tablet and mobile friendly. As demonstrated throughout the Forum, junior doctors could be the drivers of such projects as they are the most familiar with their information needs.

Flexible working arrangements for junior doctors

Increasingly flexible working arrangements are at the forefront of medical administration, workforce and junior doctor focus. Victoria will be conducting a part-time internship pilot study in 2015 and presenting their findings at the next Forum. South Australia is addressing this issue at a limited capacity. The Transforming Health agenda may provide opportunity to rethink how this issue could be better addressed for junior doctors.

Conclusion

Overall, in comparison with other states and territories, SA MET Unit is keeping abreast of common issues relating to junior doctor's needs. In some areas such as online assessment, the SA MET unit is a leader. Key areas which could receive some focus in 2015 include:

- > Cultural Awareness and Safety Training.
- > Support of junior doctors.
- > Partnering with junior doctors in creation of training, which addresses their needs.
- > Creation of further online education packages in partnership with the LHNs.

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Date:	3 December 2014