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AMC spotlight on workplace based assessment

A national workshop being held in Newcastle this week will put the spotlight on workplace based assessment of International Medical Graduates (IMGs).

Workplace based assessment is an innovative model of assessing the clinical skills and safety to practise of IMGs, as an alternative to assessment through the Australian Medical Council's Clinical examination. It was singled out in a recent report of a Commonwealth parliamentary inquiry as an important initiative warranting greater support from governments and providers.

The workshop – auspiced and funded by the Australian Medical Council – will be held in Newcastle on 18 and 19 April 2012 and showcase the award winning workplace based assessment program in place in Hunter New England Health Service. It will be opened by Mr Steve Georganas MP, Member for Hindmarsh and Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing which held the recent IMG inquiry.

The workshop will bring together all the major agencies involved in the delivery of workplace based assessment around Australia, to share knowledge, identify barriers to wider implementation and determine how to increase the availability of effective workplace based assessment programs.

AMC President, Professor Richard Smallwood AO, said the AMC fully supported the wider implementation of workplace based assessment, which was a proven alternative assessment method that was constructive for IMGs and benefitted local communities.

“We are bringing together the major agencies and jurisdictions involved in these programs to see if we can break through current barriers, learn about the best delivery models and identify how best to garner support for expanding them around Australia,” Professor Smallwood said.

“That result will benefit IMGs and local communities, and will help build a sustainable medical workforce,” he said.

Hunter New England Health's Director of the Centre for Medical Professional Development, Professor Kichu Nair, said the workplace-based assessment program in Hunter New England was developed to make the employment pathway for IMGs smoother so they are better equipped to bring their expertise and skills into our health care facilities.

“It also gives the IMGs a better orientation to our clinical environment and culture and also allows us to address differences between their training and clinical practice in Australia,” Professor Nair said.

To date, 68 IMGs have successfully completed the workplace based assessment program in Hunter New England Health, with another 14 IMGs currently enrolled.

“Hunter New England Health has retained 78 per cent of IMGs in its medical workforce, helping the region address a shortage of doctors by increasing its medical workforce, and improving outcomes for patients,” Professor Nair said.

Guest Speakers at the workshop will include:

- Mr Steve Georganas MP, Member for Hindmarsh and Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing will open the National Workshop
- Mr Ian Frank, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Medical Council
- Professor Kichu Nair AM, Director Centre for Medical Professional Development, HNELHD, Associate Dean, School of Medicine and Public Health, University of Newcastle, Director Workplace Based Assessment Program HNELHD.
- Professor Richard Doherty, Chairman of Board of Examiners, Australian Medical Council
- Professor Barry McGrath, Chair of Medicine for Clinical Examination and Workplace Based Assessment
- Professor Liz Farmer, Accreditation Committee for International Medical Graduate Assessment, AMC
- Associate Professor Jill Gordon, Chair, Accreditation Committee for International Medical Graduate Assessment, AMC

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