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NT General Practice Education Ltd

From medical student to Medical Director...

My wife Minh and I were looking out the window of an Air North plane they nicknamed "the pencil". The land below was vibrant green interrupted frequently with pools of shallow water, billabongs and rivers that looked like it was made by the rainbow serpent. The land was alive and breathing. The land was welcoming and beckoning us to come and spend some time with it. I could not wait for the plane to land. I did not know what to expect. Was there going to be a crowd waiting for us to welcome us? Would the airstrip

be bitumen or gravel? Would the humidity be stifling? Would the wet season's rain and heat remind me of my childhood in Vietnam?

These were my memories and thoughts as I flew into Nhulunbuy to start my basic GPR training eight years ago. It was an exciting time and a well spent youth.

It is with great excitement that I find myself as NTGPE Director of Medical and Cultural Education. As I and my family arrive in

Darwin, I felt like I had never left the Northern Territory. The landscape still has its appeal and the humidity and heat did not hit as hard as the first time when I and my wife

arrived. I remembered promoting NTGPE RUSC program to Monash University medical students last year with a couple of NTGPE visiting staff. At this function the RUSC coordinator encouraged the students in the audience to be like me and "go all the way". My association with the NT began as a medical student during a clinical placement at Walangurru community clinic. Inspired by this experience as a student I returned to complete my general practice training in the Northern Territory's Nhulunbuy, Galinwin'ku and Numbulwar communities. I continued on as the resident GP at Lajamanu Community. During my time in Lajamanu I was an ME for NTGPE. I never thought I could once again contribute to the education and workforce needs of the Northern Territory.

In the last 3 years I have been working as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of General Practice at Monash University, Melbourne. As a Senior Lecturer, as well as undergraduate teaching, I coordinated the successful Indigenous Health Education Program and help deliver the clinical course for



Dr Hung The Nguyen Director of Medical & Cultural Education

International Medical Graduates.



Dr Hung The Nguyen teaching at Lajamanu

I have a keen interest in cross-cultural medicine. I am working with the Medical Practitioner Board of Victoria to deliver the Culturally Competent Practice in

the Australian Medical System course, and I am the Chair of the RACGP's Curriculum Review Working Group for Multicultural Health. I am also very concerned about the level of support for International Medical Graduates (IMGs also known as overseas trained doctors (OTDs)) nationally but particularly in the Northern Territory. I hope to contribute to the support of IMGs/OTDs working in different contexts in the NT.

My appointment coincided with the wonderful news that NTGPE is oversubscribed in all of its programs from undergraduate, junior doctors and GP registrar training programs. This has been a result of the continuing hard work from all staff at NTGPE. The challenge for us now is to capitalize on this result and coordinate effective educational and support programs for our medical students and doctors. The challenge is also to work collaboratively with relevant organisations in the NT and interstate to continue to achieve excellence in medical and cultural education.

Hung the Nguyen - Director Medical & Cultural Education

Jnr Doctor Program gets even bigger in 2007

Well what a year the Prevocational General Practice Placements Program has had. After looking at the dwindling numbers for 2006 we decided to approach the national body and seek approval to canvas hospitals from interstate offering term placements in remote locations around the NT. Thinking that only a few would take up this offer and knowing that we only had 5 full time equivalent positions to fill we headed south to Adelaide, Cairns, Brisbane and Sydney.

The response we received was overwhelming and we have now found ourselves applying for extra funding commencing in 2007, giving us a total of 12 full time equivalent placements. Even this number means that we are oversubscribed and now know that we have something very special and unique to offer the other states. The word is spreading extremely fast about the wonderful time the Junior Drs have on their placement.

We have also taken the time to work closely with our clinic sites to make sure that both the Junior Dr and clinic feel well supported. ACRRM has increased

the clinic incentive payments, which has enabled them to purchase equipment, textbooks, furniture and other items for their clinic.

Presenting our model of the program at the Prevocational Medical Education Forum that was held in Adelaide this year was a highlight, giving us a wonderful avenue to showcase what we do well and how much capacity for growth the program has in the NT.

NTGPE is hoping to be able to offer an "intern" model of the PGPPP program mid next year, which will give end stage interns the opportunity to go into a Urban General Practice setting as part of their on going training.

This past year has seen some wonderful junior doctors head out to the rural and remote areas of the NT and we have been lucky enough to have 6 of these doctors join

the GP Training Program commencing in either 2006 or 2007, which is a fantastic outcome.

We would like to thank all of the clinics and supervisors that have taken the time to host a junior doctor placement and giving them the time to show them what a wonderful career path General Practice can be. Without you, this program would not be the success it is now.

Nicole Lamb - PVGPPP



NTGPE stand at GPCE 2006 Ada Parry & Nicole Lamb

Winding down the year

Winding down to the end of a fantastic and busy year, it's worthwhile taking time to consider how far we have come this year. Our ED Dr Michael Wilson has set some clear goals and targets and NTGPE is becoming more streamlined and functional.

We are excited that Dr Hung The Nguyen has commenced in his role of Director of Medical and Cultural Education and we look forward to the direction he will provide to all the NTGPE programs. Hung and wife Minh and children arrive in Darwin on the 3rd December.

It was sad to lose Dr Kim Manias this month. Many of you will have worked closely with Kim during the past couple of years in his role as Medical Educator and Training Adviser and he contributed greatly to the educational content of the program. He also supported and guided staff with his humour and good nature. He helped us see the

funny side of most situations and we laughed a lot!

In 2006, we held successful workshops for GPRs and Trainers with highly positive feedback received. Small Group Learning Activities were introduced in January and were well received by GPRs, with a broad range of topics covered. Feedback from GPRs drives the workshop programs.

For the GP Training Program, we look forward to a full year in 2007 with 21 new commencers and 6 GPRs transferring in during the year. We welcome all the new people and hope they get the most out of their time in the NT, wherever they are based. From January, NTGPE will implement the Rural Transition Program, giving GPRs in the Rural Pathway the opportunity to undertake 6 months in mainstream general practice in Darwin as preparation to going 'rural'.

We were delighted to learn that an NT GPR, Dr David Mitchell was awarded the RACGP "GPR of the Year for 2006". David was an outstanding GPR, with the RAAF in Darwin until he was transferred to Newcastle early in 2006. David has since gained FRACGP.

Iwould like to thank Loraine Dalwood-Mason for her wonderful work in Alice Springs this past year. I know all the GPRs and Trainers, as well as the Medical Educators, love working with Loraine. Loraine, you're a God-send! And thanks for the ride on your Harley! Thanks, too, to Bill, without whose IT know-how and calm, sensible manner, I would have been lost. His support to the program has been invaluable.

I wish everyone a joyous and safe Christmas and New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2007.

Kathy Jannis
GP Training Program Coordinator



The CEMENT Team at the Old Telegraph Station - Alice Springs

NTGPE hosted another successful GPR workshop, with 25 GPRs from around the Territory coming together in Alice Springs from November 1st – 3rd. Phew! Special thanks to our heroes Loraine Dalwood -Mason and Kim Manias for the huge effort they put into organising this event.

Highlights included the opening morning at The Telegraph Station, where the shady gum trees, green lawns and a smoking ceremony provided a fabulous way to relax into the workshop, and reconnect with each other.



The remainder of the workshop was in the new "West Wing" building, and overall the various lecture rooms, gardens, and the all important tea room provided a cool, calm and spacious venue. The STEMI workshop proved challenging, with high standards and adherence to protocols expected. Congratulations to those who completed it on this occasion.

Kim Manias designed a fantastic "mock-Kviva" exam session, which worked very well – the NTGPE staff offices proved great consultation rooms, and time keeping by Bill Searle and Kathy Jannis ensured it all ran well. GPR feedback was that it should be held at every workshop – something to look forward to for the thespians amongst the Medical Educators. We will really miss Kim's expertise, wit and pithy wisdom – but his work lives on!



The workshop dinner at the Alice Resort was well attended – what a great opportunity to socialise with peers as well as partners and children. There was also opportunity to reflect on some of the rewards, as well as challenges of general practice, and gain an insight into the challenges faced by Aboriginal health workers. The need for self-

care and maintaining well-being, and importantly the resources we all have for doing, this were shared generously by all the GPRs and Educators.

GPR feedback to NTGPE is very valuable – interestingly the issues raised by GPRs were almost identical to concerns shared by MEs. Some outcomes are developing feedback processes on training practices; formative assessment, and better orientation for remote placements. MEs have been busy doing ECTVs – by now most GPRs will have completed their requirements for the year, hopefully finding them useful and enjoyable. Training Adviser meetings should also be organised for the end of year, with the opportunity to review learning plans and portfolios. Hopefully next year more GPRs will seek to do videotaped consultation feedback – don't forget that you can borrow equipment from NTGPE to do this in your practices.

The final Small Group Learning sessions will be in December – stay tuned on plans for next year. The format seems to have worked well, with the GPRs directing the learning and "picking the brains" of expert speakers.

The "NTGPE team" is now busy preparing for the record number of new GPRs joining in 2007 with an orientation workshop in Darwin in January. This has been expanded to 3 days to include more time on cultural education, self care and the nitty gritty of the administrative maze of general practice.

How exciting to see that doctors are choosing to train for general practice in the Northern Territory – and hopefully to stay and provide a much needed service to the community. What a great place to live and work in – and thank you all for a year of fun learning! Have a safe, restful and rejuvenating holiday season.

Ameeta Patel - Medical Educator



Trainers Tracks

Trainer Liaison Officer Update

I understand that it will soon be Xmas ! Having taken 5 years to adjust to cards and decorations depicting snowy scenes and fellas in woolly red suits jumping around on reindeer in the desert, a whole new challenge has befallen your disorientated Liaison Officer.

We now have more Trainers, of all denominations, on our payroll (metaphorically in many instances !) than ever before. Judging by the attendance at this year's and the interest in future Workshops, we will have to pull out all the stops to live up to everyone's expectations for 2007.

I have it on good authority that next year "L" (as she is known to some of her friends and former friends) will adorn the event with "Fs & Bs" for which she is justifiably renowned in other circles. I also understand that she intends to persuade a number of colleagues to do likewise. "Fs & Bs" ? You'll just have to attend the Workshop to find out

In the meantime I would like to take this opportunity to offer a huge thanks to all the Trainers, on behalf of NTGPE, without whom, as has been said many times before and should be said many times again, this would

my "electorate". I say electorate in the knowledge that I am approaching the end of 3 years in the role and am conscious of the possible disadvantages of outstaying my welcome. Whilst I will probably be prepared to continue in the absence of any other nominations in June, I feel it is important for others to consider what they may be able to bring to the role for the benefit of the Trainers' Network, NTGPE and its Learner Groups as a whole

Either way, I am very much looking forward to another year of diverse challenges in my various roles as advocate, resource, teacher, clinician, supporter and colleague, amongst others

It is most pleasing to note the record numbers of applicants to NTGPE's training programmes during 2006, a further endorsement of the high quality training and supervision provided by its Trainers

Another well-deserved pat on the back !

Do have a peaceful and, where possible, relaxing holiday period and I very much hope to catch up with everyone again in 2007

Don't miss those "F & Bs" !

"N"



Thankfully though we are blessed in having one of The Territory's supreme social butterflies amongst our staff. Most of you will of course be fully aware of her identity, but for those who aren't I shall keep it secret for now by only referring to her as L D-M (when I remember !). In keeping with her unsurpassed levels of dedication to the organisation

not all be possible.

Having the privilege of networking widely on a national basis with other TLOs during the past few years only confirms the outstanding commitment and motivation and the almost complete lack of whingeing (to borrow a term encapsulated by this country's cricket captain) displayed by

What's on Dec - Feb

When	What	Where
Dec 22 - 1st Jan	NTGPE Office Closed	Territory Wide
Jan 15 - 17th	NTGPE - GP Registrar Orientation Workshop	Darwin (CDU)
Jan 18th	NTGPE - Medical Education Cultural Education Workshop	Darwin
Jan 22nd	NTGPE - GPR Commence Term 1	Territory Wide
Feb 1st	GPET- Academic Posts round 1 applications open	National
Feb 15th	TEDGP - Cardiology Workshop	Darwin
Feb 28 - Mar 2nd	Improving Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health	Sydney
For more information please contact ntgpe, email admin@ntgpe.org or phone 08 8946 7077		

Staffing news & update

As the end of the year is rapidly approaching NTGPE would like to take this opportunity to thank all Trainers, Clinics and placement locations for all their assistance and cooperation throughout 2006. It is your ongoing support expertise and advice that contributes to the NT being one of the most exciting training location in Australia. We would like to wish everyone involved a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

NTGPE offices will be closed for the Christmas New Year period from Friday 22nd December 2006 to Monday 1st January 2007, opening for business on Tuesday 2nd January. We look forward to working together again in 2007.

Since our last issue we have seen several Medical Education staff resign their positions at NTGPE to focus their energies on clinical work. Dr Kim Manias finished with NTGPE following the recent GP Registrars workshop. Kim played a key role in coordinating the Medical Education network over the last 12 months and made significant contributions to our annual workshop program, the development of educational resources and was instrumental in the small group and self-directed learning initiatives. We wish Kim all the best for the future and hope that he enjoys his more focused clinical role.

Drs' Tamsin Cockayne and Dana Fitzsimmons have also left to focus their energies on vital clinical roles at Gove District Hospital and Kakadu Health Services. Tamsin was one of our remote located educators and provided key support to Registrars placed in centres on the Gove Peninsula. Dana spent a year or so at NTGPE as the RUSC Medical Educator providing medical orientation and support to medical students from around the country. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tamsin and Dana for their work and their contributions and wish them all the best in their future roles.

Rosanna Pley and Seda Ertuna have also re-thought their futures and decided to leave NTGPE. Roseanna spent many hours paying the bills and taking receipt of monies to keep the organisation ticking over as an integral member of the finance team. Roseanna has left to kick back for a while and contemplate her future. We would like to thank Roseanna for her contributions over the years and wish her all the best for the future. Seda and her partner moved to Melbourne at the beginning of 2006 with Seda remaining with NTGPE in her role of executive officer to the Board of Directors. Seda kept the Board running from a distance for the next few months and has now decided to build a future in the

south. We would also like to wish her all the best for the future and thank her for her contributions to NTGPE and the Board.

Dr Justin Coleman has worked at Jabiru for the past 2 years and has been an invaluable part of the NTGPE team of dedicated GP supervisors and trainers.

Justin has not only been a GP supervisor / trainer as part of the GP Training Program, but has also taken back to back medical students and junior doctors, making Kakadu Health Service a much sought after placement, not to mention the regular newsletter articles for the many rural medical publications around the nation painting a wonderful picture of general practice in the NT.

The Coleman family is leaving us to move to sunny Queensland where our loss is their gain. We hope Justin will make it back to the NT once again sometime soon.

Joining NTGPE in the finance team is Natalie Maher. Natalie and her family have recently moved to Darwin from Goondiwindi, Qld. Her background in the finance area includes working for a medical centre with 8 doctors, three years in a solicitors firm and other such jobs, so she comes with a strong background for the job. We would like to welcome Natalie to NTGPE.