The WA Rural Practice Pathway (RPP) is a training pathway for doctors with an interest in rural medicine.

The RPP Working Party is a collaborative of training organisations that has been established to develop and implement a cross-organisational plan to support and grow training opportunities for doctors with an interest in rural practice.

The collaborative includes Country Health Services (CHS) Rural Clinical School of WA (RCS), Postgraduate Medical Council of WA (PMCWA), WA General Practice Education and Training (WAGPET), the AMA Doctors in Training (AMA DiT), JMO Forum and Rural Health West.

The RPP is supported by highly experienced medical training personnel working throughout rural WA, and offers a range of supports for all doctors undertaking rural postgraduate training.
Rural Practice Pathway

- This rural training pathway includes all stages of training, from medical student through to internship, prevocational and vocational training.

- Trainees on the RPP can train towards fellowships with generalist or specialty colleges.

- Trainees enrolled in the RPP are supervised by both generalists and specialists in rural hospitals, primary care settings, remote health clinics and Aboriginal medical services.

About Country Health Service (CHS)

- WA Country Health Service context
  - 70 hospitals, 8000 employees
  - Services approximately 25% of the WA population
  - 10.1% Indigenous
  - CHS regions cover 2.5 million km²
  - 80% of major trauma originates in country WA
  - Major residential aged care provider – 500+ beds
  - Same number of emergency presentations as entire metropolitan area
  - Roughly same number of obstetric deliveries as King Edward Memorial Hospital
  - Generalist model of health service delivery
  - Effective linkages with metropolitan state-wide services
Working Together

- The RPP working party has been meeting regularly since 2008.

- Recent achievements of the RPP include:
  - Successfully obtaining funds through Junior Doctor Business Case and Royalties for regions to increase number of rural junior doctor training places in WA.
  - Growing the total number of rural junior doctor training positions from 25 in 2008 to 86 in 2012/2013.
  - Establishment of the CHS Postgraduate Medical Education Unit, supported by 2 Co-Directors and Medical Education Officers.
  - Directors of Clinical Training and Medical Education Officers have been funded in six regions throughout WA.
  - Integration of rural prevocational General Practice Program Placements into 12 month RMO positions at Bunbury, Broome and Albany.
  - Development of a shared database of medical students and junior doctors enquiring about rural career and training advice, which will allow effective communication between stakeholders.
  - Development of a collaborative RPP newsletter and other communication avenues that consolidate information regarding rural training and educational opportunities for junior doctors.

Working together for a healthier country WA
Prevocational Training Opportunities

PREVOCATIONAL TRAINING POSTS ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL MAJOR REGIONAL HOSPITALS

- Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie, Broome, Geraldton, Pt Hedland, Kununurra.
- Disciplines include Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, General Surgery, Psychiatry, Orthopaedics, Paediatrics and Obstetrics & Gynaecology.
- The Prevocational General Practice Program (PGPPP) provides training in a variety of primary care settings, including private general practice, hospital clinics and Aboriginal Medical Services and Public Health.

Vocational Training Opportunities

- General Practice Registrars wishing to train in the rural setting must apply to WAGPET and work towards either the RACGP or ACRRM fellowship.
- CHS is working together with WAGPET to develop more accredited training positions for GP registrars wishing to undertake special and advanced skills training within CHS hospitals.
- Currently, CHS offers accredited training positions to procedural GP registrars at Broome Health Services, Kununurra District Hospital, Port Hedland Hospital, Nickol Bay Hospital.
- GP Registrars may also be credentialled to provide VMO services to local CHS hospitals across rural WA as part of their training, including procedural services such as obstetrics, anaesthetics, emergency medicine and surgery.
Vocational Training Opportunities

THE SPECIALIST TRAINING PROGRAM (STP) PROVIDES FUNDING TO SUPPORT RURAL SPECIALIST REGISTRAR TRAINING POSITIONS ACROSS CHS HOSPITALS

Currently CHS offers 21 accredited specialist registrar training positions across the following disciplines and sites:

- Bunbury: Emergency Medicine, O&G, General Surgery, General Medicine, Ophthalmology, Anaesthetists and Psychiatry;
- Albany: General Medicine;
- Geraldton: O&G;
- Kalgoorlie: General Medicine, General Paediatrics and Psychiatry;
- Broome: General Medicine and Psychiatry;
- Port Hedland: Paediatrics and Public Health.

Three new positions will be available from 2013 – one EM post in Bunbury and two Paediatrics positions located in Broome and Kalgoorlie.

Intern Training Positions

- Rural Intern positions have increased from 12 in 2008 to 27 in 2013.
- For 2013, the RPP received 53 intern applications with a preference for up to 44 weeks in rural hospitals.
- In 2012, Bunbury hospital offered 5 positions to interns that included 4 rotations on site and one rotation at Royal Perth Hospital. These positions were oversubscribed by applicants in the 2013 recruitment process.
- In 2012, Albany hospital offered 3 positions to interns that included 3 rotations on site and two rotations at Fremantle Hospital. These positions were oversubscribed by applicants in the 2013 recruitment process, and many applicants requested 4 rotations at Albany Hospital.
- In 2012, Broome hospital offered 4 positions to interns that included 2 rotations on site and three rotations at Fremantle Hospital. These positions were oversubscribed by applicants in the 2013 recruitment process.

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RMO Training Positions

- RMO positions have increased from 13 in 2008 to 47 advertised in 2013.
- For 2013, CHS received 139 applications for RMO positions, of which 59 were deemed suitable for shortlisting with CHS. 41 applicants were offered a position with WACHS in the first round of job offers.
- In 2012, Bunbury Hospital offered 10 x 12 month RMO positions rotating through 5 specialties, plus 11 full year ED positions. In 2013, Bunbury Hospital will offer a further 2 x 12 month RMO positions including 2 x 6 month rotations, including a PGPPP rotation.
- In 2012, Albany hospital offered 5 x 12 month RMO positions rotating through 5 specialties. In 2013, Albany Hospital will offer these positions again.
- In 2013, Broome Hospital will offer 5 x 12 month RMO positions rotating through 5 specialties, including a PGPPP rotation, as well as 6 x 12 month RMO positions based in the ED.
- In 2013, Geraldton Hospital will offer 5 x 12 month RMO positions through 5 specialties.

GP Training Positions

- In 2012, CHS funded 2 x 12 month training positions for GP Anaesthetists.
- These positions include 6 months at Joondalup Hospital and 6 months an Bunbury Hospital.
- On finishing this training year, GP registrars are then eligible to apply to the GP Anaesthetics Mentoring Program, funded by CHS and administered by Rural Health West. These scholarships provide 12 months of mentoring and financial support to newly graduated GP Anaesthetists in a rural setting.
- CHS also funds the GP Obstetrics Mentoring Program, administered by Rural Health West to provide similar scholarships to newly graduated GP Obstetricians working in a rural setting.
Work Place Based Assessment

- In 2011/12, CHS funded 13 x 12 month Resident Medical Officer in Bunbury positions for candidates undertaking the Work Based Assessment Program as an alternate pathway for general registration for International Medical Graduates on the Standard Pathway.
- 12 of the 13 candidates successfully completed the requirements (92% pass rate as opposed to a 40-50% pass rate for the AMC Clinical Exam). 75% of these successful candidates remained in a rural setting. All successful candidates remained in WA.
- In 2012/13 a second cohort of 10 candidates enrolled for Bunbury
- In 2012/13, there will be 10 x 12 month WBA positions offered in Bunbury and a further 3 positions offered in Kalgoorlie.

Support for training

- CHS hospital posts provide well supported training for junior doctors
- Each regional hospital employs a Director of Clinical Training (DCT) and a Medical Education Officer (MEO) to support junior doctors.
- All training posts are accredited by the PMCWA and Registrar posts are accredited by the relevant colleges.
- Central Postgraduate Medical Education Unit (PMEU) provides education, training and supervision support and resources to the regional DCTs, MEOs and junior doctors.
Postgraduate Medical Education Unit

- A number of initiatives have been implemented over the past 12 months since the inception of the CHS PMEU, including:
  - Postgraduate Medical Education & Training Committee (PETC): develops policy and guidelines around prevocational training within Country Health Services;
  - Rural JMO Society: provides networking opportunities and support to junior doctors working across rural WA;
  - RPP website: provides up-to-date information to junior doctors on training pathways and education resources;
  - DCT and MEO Forum: provides regular opportunities for networking and sharing of ideas between the regions;
  - Regional Supervisor workshops: provides upskilling opportunities to junior doctor supervisors across rural hospitals in WA;
  - Free ACRRM or RACGP membership for junior doctors working for CHS.

Support with Accommodation and Travel

- Each CHS hospital provides free accommodation or substantial rental subsidies to their junior doctor employees;
- Each CHS hospital provides travel subsidies and relocation allowances to support the junior doctor moving to their rural town;
- Funding for these accommodation and travel subsidies is provided through Royalties for Regions.
Benefits to the trainee

- Trainees working in rural health settings report that they get exposure to a broader variety of medical presentations, hence increasing their knowledge and skills quickly and preparing them for working as rural practitioners.

- Trainees report that they get more opportunities to gain ‘hands on’ experience with managing patients and performing various medical procedures.

- Trainees report developing close working relationships with their supervisors and mentors which last beyond the duration of their rural rotation.

- Trainees report that they feel like a valuable member of the health workforce and have many opportunities to integrate with the local community due to the close-knit nature of rural towns.

Enjoy the rural experience

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