



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Media Release

Medical scholarships to help close the gap

Friday, 18 March, 2011

Indigenous medical students and trainees are being called to apply for a scholarship to attend one of Australia's premier medical conferences and help close the gap on Indigenous health.

Scholarships are being awarded to five outstanding Indigenous medical students and RACP trainees from Australia or New Zealand to attend The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Congress, to be held for the first time in Darwin from 22 to 25 May.

The Congress theme, *Take up the Challenge: Indigenous Health and Chronic Disease* speaks to the health concerns impacting Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori communities across Australia and New Zealand.

The Congress is the premier event of the College which attracts over 700 delegates, comprising of physicians, physician trainees and other health professionals.

The Congress features a multi-disciplinary program that showcases excellence in Australasian medicine and medical sciences.

"The Congress offers an opportunity for physician trainees, medical students and other visiting medical specialists to attend a wide range of sessions, including expert medical updates on specialty areas outside of their own area of practice and training" RACP President Professor Kolbe said.

There is still a shocking disparity between the life expectancy of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and New Zealanders.

Current figures suggest that Indigenous men and women can expect to live on average 17 years less than other Australians, and Indigenous children are two to three times more likely to die before their first birthday than other Australian children.

Cultural and financial factors and distance have been established as key barriers limiting Indigenous Australians' and New Zealanders access to mainstream services. Low levels of access by Indigenous people to primary health care settings and inadequate government funding contribute to their continuing poor health status.

The Congress program will be offering an extensive range of workshops, plenary and concurrent sessions across the four-day program. With all College Faculties, Divisions and Chapters strongly represented at the Congress, key sessions include 'From clinical practice to academia and population health: Indigenous health and trust: Hard to win, easy to lose' with Professor David Simmons, 'Indigenous dementia' with Associate Professor Dina LoGuidice and 'Chronic disease in the working population' lead by Associate Professor Tim Driscoll.

Other key sessions include addiction, meaningful rehabilitation for Indigenous people and engaging with Indigenous communities, drawing upon professional experience and past successes.

The Australasian Faculty of Occupation and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM) will hold numerous worksite visits from Monday 23 May.

The closing date for applications is 31 March, 2011.

Ends

About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 13,500 physicians and 5,000 trainees – often referred to as medical specialists – across Australia and New Zealand. It represents more than 25 medical specialties including paediatrics & child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology and public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the well being of patients. www.racp.edu.au

About the Congress: For more information about the RACP Congress 2011 visit www.racpcongress2011.com.au

What are the scholarship entitlements?

- Return economy airfares from your nearest capital/major city to Darwin (up to A\$1,000)
- Three night's accommodation at a hotel nominated by the Congress Managers
- Full Trainee Registration (four days) or Medical Student Registration (four days)

What are the eligibility criteria?

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Maori descent
- Medical students, studying, researching or working in a field of medicine, medical science or medical education at an undergraduate or trainee level
- RACP trainees

For further information, please contact:

Kate White
Communications Officer
The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
02 9256 9674 or 0408 639 697