The new premises of the School of Primary Health Care was officially launched by The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP, Minister for Health, on 15 May 2008.

This significant milestone in the history of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, highlighted the pivotal role our School and its respective Departments/Centres are playing in the future direction of primary care teaching, training, research and health care delivery.

From its humble beginnings, the School is now the most rapidly growing entity in the Faculty, with student numbers increasing from around 500 in 2004 to over 1200 in 2008, and staff numbers in excess of 160 EFT (excluding honorary staff).

Attended by over 130 guests, including key research partners, collaborators, local government and community representatives, and University staff, the Launch of the Notting Hill facilities provided an ideal forum for showcasing the School’s numerous activities and output.

In addition, two books written by SPHC staff were launched as part of the proceedings. Understanding Health Promotion by Prof Helen Keleher (Head, Dept of Health Science) & A/Prof Colin MacDougall (Finders University), and Introduction to Research in the Health Sciences by S. Polgar & Professor Shane Thomas (Head, Primary Care Research) were respectively launched by Head of School, Prof Leon Piterman AM. Both publications were well received by many of the guests, who took the opportunity to acquire signed copies from the authors.

Special thanks to Mr Damien Farrell (Director, External Relations, Office of the Vice-Chancellor), Dr Keith Nelson, Mrs Annabel Whitby, Ms Helen Vella, Mrs Jenny Geen and staff of SPHC, all of whom assisted in making this such a memorable and successful event.

In other news, we congratulate recent graduate Dr Aisha Al Ali on the completion of her Master of Family Medicine (see page 2), and A/Prof Chris Trotter, Dept of Social Work, whose book Working with Involuntary Clients has just been translated and published in Japanese and is currently being translated into Chinese by Living Psychology, Taiwan.

In this issue we also celebrate the Official Launch of the Southern
Physiotherapy Clinical-School, and welcome new research team members and students to the Multicultural Health Unit. We also meet Department of Health Science staff member, Andrew Joyce (Staff Profile).

Finally, congratulations to the many recent grant award recipients across the School.

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Dr Aisha Al Ali, who recently completed her Master of Family Medicine (Clinical) with the Department of General Practice, attended her graduation ceremony in May 2008 at the Robert Blackwood Concert Hall. Dr Al Ali, from Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, spent two years completing her Master degree undertaking study in women’s health and dermatology among other subjects. “I enjoyed my stay and study,” says Dr Al Ali, who also said she found Monash to be “A safe and welcoming environment for students from around the world, if I had the chance to do it again I wouldn’t change a thing.” Dr Al is now looking into a medical teaching career herself. Congratulations also to Dr Sanad Alsaqqar who recently graduated in the Master of Family Medicine (Clinical).

Official Launch of the Southern Physiotherapy Clinical-School

Physiotherapy departments across Southern Health are celebrating their new association with Monash University. The newly developed Southern Physiotherapy Clinical-School, incorporating Southern Health sites and Gippsland partners (Bairnsdale, Sale, Warragul and Traralgon), will provide clinical education to nearly half of the physiotherapy students from the new Monash University undergraduate physiotherapy course.

Professor Jenny Keating, Head, Department of Physiotherapy, Professor Leon Piterman, Head, School of Primary Health Care, and Elizabeth Scutt, Head, Southern Physiotherapy Clinical-School, spoke at the official opening at Dandenong Hospital on Wednesday 30th April, 2008.

Southern Health sites across the continuum of care are providing placements for physiotherapy students this year, some of them for the first time. In 2008 we will see Monash University students complete the core placements of musculoskeletal, neurological and cardiothoracic, as well as paediatrics and several specialist electives. This is a great opportunity for both organisations – providing excellent clinical placements for Monash students and allowing those students to appreciate career opportunities at Southern Health.

Professor Jenny Keating
Monash Multicultural Health Unit (MMHU)

The Monash Multicultural Health Unit (MMHU) welcomes new members to the research team. Mr John Achouth and Miss Nyathon Mai will be conducting interviews as part of a study funded by the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) and the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) which will examine pathways and barriers to mental health care in Sudanese youth. The MMHU is also conducting a study which will assess psychosocial risk factors including depression for co-morbid chronic heart disease in CALD groups specifically in the Greek-born and Italian-born populations. Research fellows Miss Isabelle Bauer, Mrs Anna Mooney, and Miss Nicole Papadopoulos will be working on this project.

2008 also brings two new students to the MMHU. Alla Demutska is currently undertaking a Doctorate of Psychology in Clinical Psychology at Monash University. Alla’s research will examine mental health issues in skilled immigrants living in Australia who are from the Former Soviet Union and the Ukraine. Beau Robertson is completing Honours in Psychology at Monash University, and will be examining depression knowledge and help-seeking behaviours in young adults from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. Both Alla’s and Beau’s research thesis will be supervised by Drs Litza Kiropoulos and Kathryn Gilson.

Special congratulations to Alla Demutska who recently received two awards: the Monash Graduate Scholarship and a Mental Health Postgraduate Scholarship from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Dr Kathryn Gilson & Dr Litza Kiropoulos

Andrew Joyce works in a joint appointment with Southern Health as a health promotion worker for Cardinia Casey Community Health Service, alongside his university role within the Department of Health Science, Peninsula Campus. His background includes working in community health, primary schools and academia specialising in mental health promotion and settings based approaches. For the last few years he has been working in the School of Public Health, Curtin University, lecturing in their health promotion department and working as a research associate for the School of Pharmacy.

Monash Clinical Teachers Information Evening

Placing students in general practice to gain experience is becoming more difficult, as student numbers increase and GPs are less available - with a GP shortage resulting in less time to devote to teaching students. Furthermore, there is little financial incentive to the GP taking a student to provide a quality learning experience. The ageing GP population may also be unfamiliar with current university medical teaching programs and possibly even feel a little intimidated by a perception of bureaucratic demands for GP involvement.

The Department of General Practice, SPHC, has taken steps to address these issues and to acknowledge the important contribution of it’s GP teachers, by recently holding an evening information session specifically for this group. The forum provided an opportunity to update or introduce GPs to the current medical teaching curriculum and what a student is expected to achieve during their general practice placement. Feedback was invited from all attendees re: suggestions for change and/or new strategies that would enable them to continue to take medical students (or to commence taking students in the future).

Participants expressed this is as a positive step in the process of recruitment of GPs as teachers... "I learnt a lot about the curriculum" and "...understand what is needed when the student is at my practice"...

Several of the suggestions offered by the participants are now being implemented by the Department, and it is hoped that further sessions will be held in the future, as this proved to be a valuable resource to participants and organisers alike..

Dr Andrew Beveridge
Other School News

New (general enquiries) School email address:
sphc@med.monash.edu.au

A virtual tour of the Notting Hill premises and room hire costs, can be viewed online at:
www.med.monash.edu.au/sphc/

Building 2, Notting Hill
The second floor of the building situated directly behind Building 1 at Notting Hill will be operational from August 2008, and will be utilised by SPHC for additional office space, providing a student lounge, learning laboratory and specialist teaching facilities (consulting rooms and video link-up to central teaching areas) for MBBS students. In addition, CARA staff (presently residing in Building 1) and CMHSE (currently based at Clayton Campus) will also be relocating to these new premises.

Upcoming Events

Official Launch of the Centre for Developmental Disability Health’s e-Learning DVD series - ‘Health and Disability: Partnerships in Action’
by The Hon. Bill Shorten, MP
Friday 15 August, 2008
Enquiries: 03 8575 2264
E: caroline.menara@med.monash.edu.au

Child Abuse Research Australia

Launch and Fundraising Dinner
Child Abuse Research Australia (CARA)
Thursday 7 August
Ballroom, Park Hyatt
Enquiries: 03 8575 2235
E: joy.karton@med.monash.edu.au

School of Primary Health Care

Notting Hill Campus
Department of General Practice
Primary Care Research Unit
Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria
Centre for Child Abuse Research Australia
Collaborative Centre for Gambling Research
Healthy Ageing Research Unit
Multicultural Health Unit
Primary Care Obesity Research Unit
Peninsula Campus
Department of Community Emergency Health and Paramedic Practice
Department of Health Science
Department of Occupational Therapy
Department of Physiotherapy
Caulfield Campus
Department of Social Work

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