

Physicians Telehealth Support Project - Exciting developments launched

The Physicians Telehealth Support Project (the Project) has recently completed its busiest project phase with work now finalised on the RACP telehealth website, the telehealth standards and guidelines and the telehealth continuing professional development (CPD) online module.

These project resources – complemented by support and advice from the Telehealth Support Officer – will equip members with the relevant information, education and practical skills to facilitate the successful integration of telehealth consultations into routine clinical practise.

The telehealth project team considered the needs of its membership in the development of the telehealth resources. Throughout September and October Fellows, trainees and overseas trained physicians (OTP) were invited to complete a survey based on their use and understanding of telehealth. The response rate to the survey was high, and the feedback was utilised to underpin the content for the Project resources and materials. Physicians have also offered valuable insights into their experiences with telehealth which will be used in video and written case studies in the development of future learning resources.

The telehealth project team and the Telehealth Working Group have also worked in partnership with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and other medical colleges to implement and deliver reciprocal telehealth support services to members.

Continue reading to find out more about the exciting telehealth project developments and support services available to members.

**The Physicians Telehealth Support Project is part of the Australian Government's Telehealth Support Program ('Connecting Health Services with the Future' initiative) and is funded to 30 June 2013.*

RACP launches Guidelines and Practical Tips for Telehealth

Following a robust consultation process the College has launched the Physicians Telehealth Support Project's RACP Guidelines and Practical Tips for Telehealth (the guidelines) to support physicians to conduct telehealth consultations.

The guidelines were based on a framework developed by Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine's (ACRRM) Telehealth Advisory Committee and incorporate aspects of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) draft standards for telehealth.

The guidelines provide advice on how to conduct telehealth consultations effectively and include comprehensive information on the clinical, technical and contextual aspects of telehealth. The guidelines also include a list of practical tips for specialty specific uses for telehealth to assist physicians judge the ethical and clinical appropriateness of telehealth for their consultations.

Dr Poh-Kooi (PK) Loh, West Australian telehealth researcher, user and Telehealth Working Group member said the guidelines are a useful reference point for physicians.

"The guidelines support the practical application of telehealth by providing helpful suggestions on conducting telehealth for both the beginner and experienced user of the media," said Dr Loh.

"They have been reviewed by a group of experienced clinicians who are frequent users of telehealth in their clinical practice."

"For physicians just starting their telehealth journey or those already using telehealth, the guidelines can be used as a resource to model their practice or to consider practical alternatives for their current practice."

The guidelines are now available as a downloadable PDF from www.racptelehealth.com.au. If you would like a hard copy of the guidelines, please contact the Physicians Telehealth Support Project team at telehealth@racp.edu.au

The Physicians Telehealth Support Project team welcomes your feedback on the guidelines and other aspects of the College's telehealth project. Please submit your comments and suggestions to the RACP telehealth message board. Visit www.racptelehealth.com.au.

