

PHYSICIANS TELEHEALTH SUPPORT PROJECT NATIONAL ROAD SHOW



The national telehealth road show proved a resounding success, creating a great deal of interest from Fellows and trainees.

The RACP's Physicians Telehealth Support Project team completed the national *Introduction to Telehealth* road show last month after hosting eight events in six states and one in the Northern Territory.

More than 300 RACP members and their support staff attended events in Darwin, Geelong, Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. The high number of attendees indicated a significant level of interest in the College's telehealth support initiative as well as the need for more innovative modalities of specialist healthcare delivery for patients in rural or remote areas, residential aged care facilities and Aboriginal Medical Services.

The road show provided an exclusive opportunity for members to discuss the local telehealth perspective, exchange ideas, and identify the successes and challenges of providing healthcare at a distance. Each road show event also included a presentation on:

- RACP telehealth support services, including how to access the online continuing professional development *Introduction to Telehealth* module
- The Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) additional telehealth item numbers and incentives
- How to assess patient geographical eligibility for telehealth consultations.

A key highlight of the road show was a presentation at the Brisbane event by Queensland Health Minister, The Honourable Lawrence Springborg. Minister Springborg presented to more than 50 Queensland RACP members on the State Government's commitment to provide equal access to specialist healthcare for the Queensland community.

Chair of the RACP Queensland State Committee, Associate Professor Michael Gabbett, said the Brisbane event was an excellent forum that facilitated peer-to-peer learning.

'Question time clearly demonstrated that many Fellows are enthusiastic to take up telehealth and the road show piqued interest in embracing the technology,' Associate Professor Gabbett said.

Another road show highlight was the Sydney event, which was attended by more than 60 people, with 29 participating via video link.

According to RACP NSW State Committee Chair, Professor Stephen Leeder, the event emphasised the need for physicians to consider the use of video conferencing to improve services to patients who have limited access to specialists.

'We have seen the future, and it is us! Even though we will be connected by satellites and broadband in ways that are almost unimaginable, there is no need at all for us to fear these technologies as dehumanising the practice of internal medicine. It is quite the contrary,' Professor Leeder said.



Dr Michael Williams, telehealth expert, presenting at the Queensland road show event on 15 May 2013



Queensland Health Minister The Hon. Lawrence Springborg presenting at the Queensland road show event

'Telehealth opens the door on new forms of collegiality as we reach out via video link to support one another in expert diagnosis and treatment. It is totally centred on the patient. It is brilliant!'

Participant evaluations from the road show were encouraging, with around 77% of attendees more likely to use telehealth in the future as a direct result of the information provided at the event.

For members who were unable to attend the road show, a recording of the RACP *Introduction to Telehealth* presentation from the RACP Congress is available at: www.racptelehealth.com.au/resources/videos/.

Acknowledgements

The RACP gratefully acknowledges the following Fellows for their contribution to the telehealth road show:

Adelaide: Dr Robin Chase (SA State Chair), Dr David Allen (Presenter)

Brisbane: Associate Professor Michael Gabbett (Qld State Chair),
Dr Michael Williams (Presenter) Darwin:
Dr Christine Connors (NT State Chair)

Geelong: Associate Professor Paul Talman (Presenter)

Hobart: Dr Jorge do Campo (Presenter)

Melbourne: Associate Professor Ian Fraser (Vic State Chair),
Professor Paul Komesaroff (Presenter)

Perth: Professor Desiree Silva (WA State Chair), Dr Poh-Kooi Loh (Presenter),
Dr James Williamson (Presenter)

Sydney: Professor Stephen Leeder (NSW State Chair),
Dr David Allen (Presenter)



Professor Stephen Leeder, Chair RACP NSW State Committee, presenting at the NSW road show event on 2 May 2013



RACP members and their support staff at the NSW telehealth road show event

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