

Creating innovative partnerships to enhance the scope of practice and cultural awareness of emergency nurses: The Western Health and Remote Area Health Corps experience.

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Objective: To demonstrate how 'the sharing of a vision' can lead to the creation of innovative and dynamic outcomes for industry and communities.

Main points: The Western Health (WH) Emergency department (ED) services the urban healthcare needs of a culturally, linguistically and economically diverse community. The Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) works with remote and diverse communities within Central Australia and the Northern Territory. The WH ED Clinical Nurse Educator and Nurse Unit Manager's shared commitment to the recruitment, development and retention of qualified ED nurses generated the need to devise an innovative strategy.

In 2014, following 8 months of planning, the WH + RAHC partnership was established. This partnership is providing the opportunity for WH ED nurses to work in a remote community to advance their nursing skills and enhance their cultural awareness. Through a pilot project, five WH nurses will undertake a six-week secondment with RAHC to work with remote indigenous communities in Central Australia and the Northern Territory.

By supporting this innovation, WH has demonstrated their commitment to the organizations' strategic focus to work collaboratively to provide quality health and well-being services for patients, staff and the community; and working together to "Close the Gap" in achieving equality in health care for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The aims and challenges of this initiative will be presented.

Conclusion: The WH + RAHC partnership was developed; WH ED nurses engaged in this initiative; and four of the five nurses have completed their remote nursing secondments. The pilot program will be evaluated upon its completion and the program concludes in December 2014. Whilst we have measurable outcomes for the success of this initiative, the expected long term benefits for the department and the organization are difficult to measure.

This innovation endorses the WH core values and the organisation's commitment to staff retention, development and recruitment of qualified ED nurses.