



# Training Update



## CEO update

### GP training reform announcement

Earlier this month, I emailed you about the GP training reform announcement made by the Minister for Minister for Health and Sport, Hon. Greg Hunt at the recent GP17 Conference.

In case you missed my email, the minister announced that negotiations are now underway with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) for them to take responsibility for the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program from 2022, with a transition period between 2019-2022.

This arrangement has been expected, and will bring many benefits for GP training into the future.

You can read my full email about the announcement [here](#). Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

### Board appointments

Last month our Annual General Meeting (AGM) saw the appointment of two new directors – Dr Karen Flegg and Mr Brett Cowling, and the re-appointment of Dr Ian Kamerman. I would like to warmly welcome the two new directors and Dr Kamerman's re-appointment, and extend my sincere gratitude to retiring directors, Dr Harry Nespolon and A/Prof Siaw-Teng Liaw. In particular I would like to thank Harry for his leadership and vision during his tenure as chair of the board. I look forward to working with long-standing board member, A/Prof Lyn Fragar AO in her new appointment as chair.

### Supervisor and practice manager feedback survey outcomes

The results of our annual supervisor and practice manager survey are now in, and we are pleased to report significant improvements in supervisor and practice manager satisfaction overall and across a number of key areas.

In response to last year's feedback, we implemented a number of new initiatives and improvements to better support practices and supervisors. This included improving access to GP Synergy personnel; remuneration and more flexible arrangements for supervisor professional development; introduction of practice manager professional development opportunities; payment for competency assessments for registrars in their third GP term and above; user experience enhancement of GPRime; and launch of the online in-practice program - SupportGPT; amongst other improvements.

We are delighted these initiatives have impacted positively on supervisor's and practice manager's experience of GP Synergy, and a summary of the 2017 survey findings is overleaf.

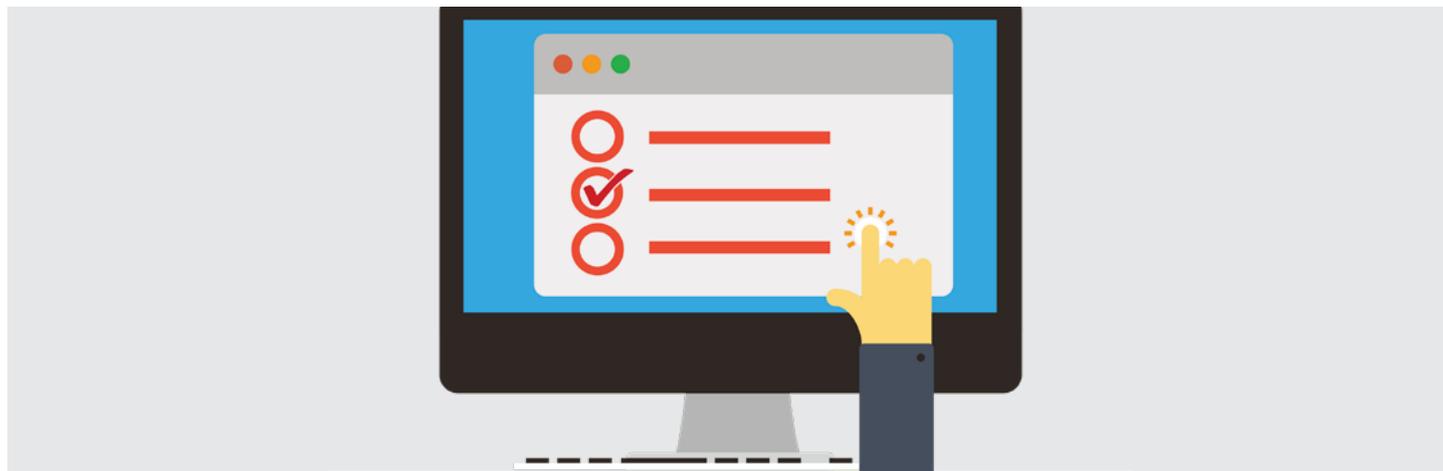
The findings indicate we are on the right track, and we are committed to continually refining and improving our systems and processes to:

- as far as possible, streamline relevant administrative processes to reduce complexity and work for training facilities when engaging with general practice training
- communicate, collaborate, and work with supervisors to develop and maintain your capacity to deliver excellent clinical supervision and teaching for GP registrars
- establish clear expectations, and provide supervisors with ongoing development and support as a clinical supervisor and mentor
- provide practice managers with education and support in the placement and training of GP registrars.

We welcome your ongoing feedback, and although we will annually seek your participation in a formal collection process, we encourage you to provide feedback at any time by contacting us or completing our [Complaints and Compliments Register](#).

**John Oldfield** | CEO

# 2017 supervisor and practice manager survey outcomes



Thank you to the 367 supervisors and 316 practice managers that took part in the 2017 GP Synergy supervisor and practice manager surveys. This year, using an external consultant we took a slightly different approach, and surveyed a random sample of each group before extending the surveys to all supervisors and practice managers.

The results for both the random and non-random sample groups were strikingly similar, with the random sample for supervisors yielding a 6.53 margin of error and 6.48 for practice managers. Respondents came from across our eight subregions, with an equal mix of rural and metropolitan respondents, and a wide range of teaching experience.

## Key findings

➔ Supervisors and practices have strong intentions to keep supervising and cited many benefits and challenges in training registrars.

- The majority of supervisors and practices intend to continue training registrars in the next twelve months, with only 3% of supervisors unlikely to be supervising in one year's time (an improvement from 8% in 2016).
- Supervisors' and practice managers' greatest enjoyment in training registrars comes from sharing their knowledge, contributing to the development of the next generation of GPs, enjoyment of teaching, and interacting with registrars.
- What supervisors and practices like least about training registrars is paperwork. Many supervisors also cited impact on workload as being a challenge, such as interruptions, patient delays, and extra work in general. A common challenge for practice managers was registrar rotations i.e. managing patient expectations, becoming attached to registrars, and the duration of registrar terms.

### Outcome:

- We are reviewing a number of key processes to streamline and reduce administration for supervisors and practices. This includes (and is not limited to):
  - streamlining competency assessments
  - improving contracting administration
  - launch of the GPRime2 supervisor and training facility portfolio in GPRime2. This will include access to registrar history, outstanding requirements summary, professional development activities attended and workshop resources, etc.
- We will continue to regularly seek feedback from supervisors and practices on a qualitative and quantitative basis and use this feedback to identify ways we can support supervisors and practices to aid retention and succession planning.

➔ Supervisors and practices interactions with administrative and medical education staff are very positive.

Supervisors and practice managers had very low levels of dissatisfaction with administrative and medical education staff in a number of surveyed areas such as their knowledge, information accuracy, responsiveness, courtesy, and individualised support.

### Outcome:

- We will continue ongoing training and development of our staff to ensure they continue to maintain high service levels.

## ➔ Supervisors and practices have a strong awareness of who they can contact for assistance, and access to support personnel has improved.

- The majority of supervisors (87%) and practice managers (97%) know about the role of the Practice Liaison and Support Officer (PLSO), with the majority of those that had contacted their PLSO being satisfied with their contact (80%).
- Just under 80% of supervisors were aware of the Supervisor Liaison Officer (SLO) role, and 80% of those that had contacted their SLO had positive experiences.
- Supervisors and practice managers access to support staff has improved with a significant drop in dissatisfaction from 17% to 6% when asked if they could reach assistance and support when required.

### Outcome:

- We will continue to monitor our triage processes and responsiveness, and review key feedback obtained to ensure we are responsive and that support is readily accessible for practices and supervisors.

## ➔ The majority of supervisors and practice managers feel the frequency of communication from GP Synergy is about right, with a diverse range of suggestions for improvement by supervisors.

- 73% of supervisors find the amount of communication just right, with 15% feeling there is too much communication and 12% feeling there is not enough. 89% of practice managers felt it was just right, with 5% stating there is not enough and 4% stating there is too much.
- Several supervisors and practice managers offered suggestions/comments about communication.

### Outcome:

- We are undertaking a communications mapping audit and process review to better understand the volume and nature of communications supervisors and practice managers receive across GP Synergy as an organisation, and where improvements can be made.
- In 2018, we will be investigating options for more informal supervisor networking opportunities.
- In 2018 we will be implementing a new online newsletter format to make training updates easier (and faster) to review.
- We are developing an accessible and easy to find supervisor/training facility manual to help supervisors and practice staff find information when they need it.

## ➔ Satisfaction with term placement is mixed.

- Satisfaction with GP Synergy's registrar term placement improved significantly from 33% of supervisors satisfied in 2016 to 60% satisfied in 2017. Satisfaction amongst practice managers has also increased from 39% to 66%.
- 25% of supervisors are dissatisfied with term placement, compared to 13% of practice managers, with the remainder neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
- Of the 25% of supervisors that were dissatisfied, 71% did not receive a registrar or as many registrars as they wanted.
- Several supervisors and practice managers offered suggestions/comments about how GP Synergy might improve term placement.

### Outcome:

- Based on comments received, there is variability across stakeholder groups as to why GP Synergy manages term placement the way it does. To elicit further feedback, and help practices develop a better understanding of the underpinning principles and aims of term placement, we will be providing face to face opportunities to discuss this important issue.
- The number of registrars in training fluctuates throughout the year as registrars move in and out of the program. This directly affects the rise and fall in supply of registrars for term placement – particularly in the second half of each year when there are fewer registrars available for placement. We will be developing proposals for consideration of the Department of Health that may allow for mid-year commencement of training to reduce associated impacts of this rise and fall.

## ➔ Supervisors and practice managers feel supported by GP Synergy, with some areas for improvement.

- Across most areas, supervisors and practice managers feel the level of support GP Synergy provides is average to high.
- There were significant improvements for supervisors, particularly in the areas of access to professional development, in-practice teaching resource support and support for managing a registrar in difficulty.

### Outcome:

- We will continue to work closely with SLOs, PLSOs and the Committee Overseeing Supervisor Education to monitor the needs of supervisors and practice managers.
- We will continue to offer and promote SupportGPT.
- We will promote other subscription services that are already available to practices but may not be realised.
- The survey found supervisor's awareness of the online in-practice teaching tool, SupportGPT was low, and 20% of supervisors did not feel there was support to choose their own registrar.

## ➔ Supervisors and practice managers perceptions of GP Synergy are increasingly positive and overall satisfaction has improved significantly.

- Supervisors' overall satisfaction with GP Synergy increased from 36% to 70%, and from 46% to 81% for practice managers.
- The majority of respondents describing GP Synergy in favourable terms increased, with commonly cited terms including organised, professional, good/excellent, efficient and supportive.
- A smaller percentage of respondents described GP Synergy in unfavourable terms, such as city-centric, impersonal and bureaucratic.
- The majority of respondents feel GP Synergy aligns with its core brand values.

### Outcome:

- We remain committed to regionalised education delivery and support, and will continue to support and develop our regional offices in our eight subregions.
- We will continue to support and develop supervisor and practice manager support roles in our subregions such as the PLSO, SLO, regional medical education teams (including regional heads of education), and medical educators with a supervisor portfolio.
- We will review our operational processes and systems to maximise efficiency and reduce where possible any unnecessary administration imposts on practices.

## Congratulations to Dr Teena Downton – ACRRM Registrar of the Year



A warm congratulations goes to GP registrar, Dr Teena Downton (pictured left) for being one of two registrars to win the ACRRM Registrar of the Year Award at the recent Rural Medicine Australia 17 Conference.

Teena is currently training in Cowra in Western NSW.

## New videos to encourage training in Aboriginal health posts



A big thank you to the staff, supervisors, and registrars who took part in the development of two new short videos to encourage registrars to train in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), and non-accredited ACCHSs to sign up to become a training facility:

- [Why train in an ACCHS?](#)
- [Why become an accredited ACCHS training facility?](#)

## Will you have a GP registrar in your practice in 2018.1? If yes, read on!

If you will have a registrar in a GP term in the first half of 2018, they will participate in the Registrars Clinical Encounters in Training (ReCEnT) research project.

### What is it?

ReCEnT is a flagship general practice education project that documents GP registrars' educational and clinical experience over time by measuring:

- what registrars do, the types of patients and conditions they see and the advice they provide
- how registrars' practice changes during their training.

### What do registrars have to do?

Registrars record information from 60 consecutive consultations once in each of their three GP training terms using an easy to fill in form.

### Are there any requirements for supervisors and practices?

As the registrars collect this information themselves there is no burden for supervisors regarding the operation of the project itself.

### What are the benefits for practices?

Three weeks after recording the consultations, registrars will receive a feedback report. This report compares the registrar with their peers and other GPs in the areas of patient demographics, diagnoses, test ordering, prescribing, and more. This report provides insights for supervisors about what their registrars are seeing and doing, and can be useful in planning in-practice teaching.

In addition, once a practice has had five registrars terms collected, they will receive an Annual Practice Report. This provides supervisors and practices with information based upon their registrars' clinical encounters. It is compared to aggregated registrar data from all practices collecting ReCEnT data, and national GP clinical activity data.

The Annual Practice Report enables supervisors and practices to see registrars' clinical exposure and aspects of their clinical and educational experience. It also provides information about the general attributes of the practice.

### What happens next?

Supervisors and practices training a GP registrar in their first, second or third GP term in the first half of 2018 will be contacted with further information prior to the start of term.

If you have any queries in the interim, please don't hesitate to contact Director, NSW and ACT Research and Evaluation Unit, Prof Parker Magin on [parker\\_magin@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:parker_magin@gpsynergy.com.au)

## \$40,000 grants for GPs to train in anaesthetics or obstetrics

Under the General Practitioner Procedural Training Support Program (GPPTSP), GPs practising in ASGS RA two to five locations can apply for \$40,000 grant funding to undertake the Advanced Rural Skills Training in Anaesthesia or gain the qualification DRANZCOG Advanced.

Applications close COB 23 November 2017.

For more information visit the ACRRM website or contact ACRRM on [gpptsp@acrrm.org.au](mailto:gpptsp@acrrm.org.au).

## Key dates

**20 Nov:** competency assessments of registrars in their first or second GP terms due\*

**15 Dec:** Medicare provider number paperwork deadline

**15 Jan:** competency assessments of registrars in all GP terms due\*

**23 Dec – 2 Jan:** GP Synergy office closure

**4 Feb:** end date 2017.2 term

**5 Feb:** start date 2018.1 term

**5 Aug:** end date 2018.1 term

\*These dates are indicative only and may vary if a registrar is part-time or commenced a GP term after the first week of term.



## New board appointments



Following the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 18 October 2017, GP Synergy welcomed new directors Dr Karen Flegg and Mr Brett Cowling to the GP Synergy Board.

We are also pleased to announce the reappointment of Dr Ian Kamerman and the appointment of long standing directors, A/Prof Lyn Fragar AO as chair and A/Prof Michelle Guppy as deputy chair.

GP Synergy extends its sincere thanks to retiring Director and Chair, Dr Harry Nespolon and Director, Dr Siaw-Teng Liaw. For more information [click here](#).

## Heading off over Christmas? Do you need to complete a supervisor leave form?

If you are taking a well-earned break over Christmas, and there are no other supervisors available in the practice during your absence, you need to complete a [Supervisor Arrangements During Leave Form](#). This is to ensure registrars are supported and safe.

To access the form: Login to GPrime, click on 'Forms, Documents and Links' and search 'leave'.

## Testing the waters and deciding to stay: Meet GP Registrar, Dr Trudi Beck and her GP Supervisor, Dr Lee Jeffery.



*Dr Trudi Beck is undertaking her GP training in Wagga Wagga, and Dr Lee Jeffery is her supervisor. Both came to Wagga Wagga during their training and have decided to stay.*



**Dr Beck:** I grew up on a farm and was a rural entry student to the University of NSW. I took the chance to come to Wagga Wagga in my third year of medical school and I met a fellow med student here and now we are married with two children!

We loved our time in Wagga Wagga, and so after moving away for further training we decided we couldn't think of anywhere better to continue our careers and raise our kids.

We have an excellent network of colleagues, friends and 'pseudo' family so I can't see us moving anytime soon!

The education and extracurricular opportunities for our children in a city of this size are excellent and we have these benefits without traffic and long commutes or high housing prices. And I can combine my loves of GP and obstetrics in a functional way.



**Dr Jeffery:** I received a Rural Doctors Network rural cadetship for my final two years of university, that involved working in a rural/regional area for two out of my first three postgraduate years. I'd grown up in Canberra, and I'd spent a bit of time in Wagga Wagga previously, so thought I'd come to Wagga Wagga and see if I really did want to become the rural GP I'd imagined. That was in 1997!

I was very lucky to have very inspiring GP supervisors as a registrar, and I would like to try to help our registrars see the joy and the challenges of general practice in a supportive environment.

At the risk of sounding corny, GP registrars are the 'lifeblood' of future rural general practice. If we want to attract young doctors to rural general practice and meet the needs of rural communities, we need to give them the opportunity to see rural general practice as it is really practised, by rural GPs who are passionate about their work and the communities they live in.

## Need some help?

### Practice Liaison and Support Officers (PLSO)

- **Central, Eastern and South Western Sydney:**
  - Lexi Kyle - 02 8321 4084  
[lexi\\_kyle@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:lexi_kyle@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Hunter, Manning and Central Coast:**
  - Lucinda Coble - 02 8321 4237  
[lucinda\\_coble@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:lucinda_coble@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Nepean, Western and Northern Sydney:**
  - Emie Roy - 02 8321 4068  
[emie\\_roy@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:emie_roy@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **New England/Northwest:**
  - Lucinda Coble - 02 8321 4237  
[lucinda\\_coble@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:lucinda_coble@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **North Coast:**
  - Rhonda O'Dell - 02 8321 4126  
[rhonda\\_odell@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:rhonda_odell@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Western NSW:**
  - Kim VanBruchem - 02 8321 4211  
[kim\\_vanbruchem@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:kim_vanbruchem@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Murrumbidgee and ACT:**
  - Jodie Hay - 02 8321 4145  
[jodie\\_hay@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:jodie_hay@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **South Eastern NSW:**
  - Jodie Hay - 02 8321 4145  
[jodie\\_hay@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:jodie_hay@gpsynergy.com.au)

### Supervisor Liaison Officers (SLO)

- **Western NSW:**  
Dr Ken Hazelton - [ken\\_hazelton@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:ken_hazelton@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **South Eastern NSW:**  
Dr James Boyd - [james\\_boyd@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:james_boyd@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **North Coast:**  
Dr John Vaughan - [john\\_vaughan@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:john_vaughan@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Nepean, Western and Northern Sydney:**  
Dr Cecile Dinh - [cecile\\_dinh@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:cecile_dinh@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Murrumbidgee:**  
Dr Ken Mackey - [ken\\_mackey@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:ken_mackey@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Central, Eastern and South Western Sydney:**  
Dr Aline Smith - [aline\\_smith@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:aline_smith@gpsynergy.com.au)
- **Hunter New England Central Coast**  
Dr Ian Charlton - [ian\\_charlton@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:ian_charlton@gpsynergy.com.au)

Whilst we continue to recruit to regions, please contact one of the SLO team listed above who will be able to assist in the interim.

#### Positions vacant:

Are you interested in becoming an SLO? Find out more by visiting our website under employment opportunities or contact Nicky Doneva on [nicky\\_doneva@gpsynergy.com.au](mailto:nicky_doneva@gpsynergy.com.au)

Expressions of interest are currently being sought for the following SLO positions:

- ACT

## Upcoming GP Synergy events

### 2017.2 supervisor professional development

- **20 November** | Supervisor networking dinner | Broken Hill | RSVP: [Angie Honeyman](#)
- **2 December** | Facilitating clinical reasoning | Inverell | RSVP: [Brianna Petit](#)

### Seasonal celebration and awards nights

- **15 November** | Mereweather Surfhouse | Newcastle | RSVP: [Jacky Porter](#)
- **16 November** | Novotel | Wollongong | RSVP: [Robyn Fanning](#)
- **17 November** | Margaret Whitlam Pavilion, National Arboretum | Canberra | RSVP: [Lilene Hewitt](#)
- **21 November** | Tamworth Jockey Club | Tamworth | RSVP: [Brianna Petit](#)
- **22 November** | Castle Hill Country Club | Castle Hill | RSVP: [Paula Lamont](#)
- **29 November** | Bondi Icebergs Club | Bondi | RSVP: [Paula Lamont](#)
- **7 December** | BreakFree Aanuka Beach Resort | Coffs Harbour | RSVP: [Fiona Anderson](#)

### 2018 supervisor professional development

An exciting 2018 program is currently being finalised and details will be circulated to supervisors and practices in December.

### 2018 practice manager professional development

Details of 2018 professional development activities for practice managers will be available in early 2018.

## Upcoming events of interest

- The University of Sydney - Getting Healthy Before Pregnancy | 18 November | Kingswood | [More information](#)
- Sydney Children's Hospitals Network - 2017 Annual Paediatric Update For General Practitioners | 25 November | Randwick | [More information](#)
- ACRRM - Rural Emergency Skills Training (REST) | 25-26 November | Coffs Harbour | [More information](#)
- Community Paediatric Department, Sydney LHD, NSW Health - The Well Child Health Program | [Online Learning Resource](#)
- National Prescribing Service Resources | [Online Learning Resource](#)
- headspace | [GP Online Training](#)

For further information please see the [External Education Activity Noticeboard](#).