
Medical Education and Well-being Registrar for Regional Medical Pathway

Initiative Type

Education and Training

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Summary

The Medical Education and Well-being Registrar is a pioneering role designed to improve medical well-being, enhance workforce nurturing and support the implementation of the Regional Medical

Pathway (RMP). In response to workforce shortages in Wide Bay and the growing recognition of burnout and well-being challenges among medical professionals, this RMP initiative aims to create a supportive environment for doctors in training, whilst growing a sustainable, locally grown workforce. By integrating well-being as a priority and providing targeted support for staff and students, the role seeks to foster a culture of resilience, empathy and holistic care to ultimately facilitate improved attraction and retention of doctors in regional hospitals. This project is a community supported, end-to-end pathway for the education and training of future regional, rural and remote doctors.

Key dates

Jan 2023

Dec 2023

Implementation sites

Bundaberg Hospital

Partnerships

University of Queensland, Central Queensland University and Medical Advisory and Pre-vocational Accreditation Unit

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Aim

The role was implemented to enhance the well-being of doctors in Wide Bay and medical students in the Regional Medical Pathway, along with improved attraction and maintenance of medical officers. By addressing the often-overlooked aspect well-being, we strived to cultivate a more supportive and sustainable environment for our medical workforce. Moreover, the role also aimed to improve the attraction and retention of doctors in Wide Bay, as a health service which faces challenges with regular turnover of medical officers.

Benefits

Medical workforce shortages at Bundaberg Hospital improved significantly from the 2022 to 2023 clinical year. The attraction of interns increased profoundly, with a 10-fold increase in applications in 2023, while the retention of interns and resident medical officers increased by 43% during this 12-month period. Other benefits included: Efficient work practices, comprehensive orientation, career guidance and the creation of a clinician well-being culture.

Background

Systemic challenges pose a barrier in medical workforce attraction and retention and clinician burnout is an occupational risk. In addition, staffing shortages are a particular concern for regional hospitals.

Solutions Implemented

To achieve our objectives, we implemented a multifaceted approach:

1. well-being education program tailored to both pre-vocational doctors and medical students
2. expanded pastoral care including:
 - Mid-term and mid-year check in meetings with interns and RMOs
 - Confidential point of escalation for workplace issues including rosters, staffing, overtime, excessive workload, team dynamics
3. personalised career counselling and guidance to support progression of pre-vocational

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- doctors onto specialty training pathways
4. collaborative rotational preferencing and allocations process
 - Rostering improvements for efficiency and fatigue mitigation
 - Streamlined leave processes
 5. clinical examination preparation workshops to support international medical graduates obtain general registration

Evaluation and Results

We employed a mixed-methods evaluation approach, including:

- HHS-wide medical well-being survey based on the Stanford Professional Fulfilment Index (PFI) to ascertain a clinical verified measure of burnout, professional fulfilment and workplace well-being drivers.
- exit interviews to gather qualitative feedback on the reasons why pre-vocational doctors choose to leave regional hospitals and welcome interviews to understand what draws doctors to the HHS.
- quantitative analysis of retention rates including identification of statistically significant trends. **Results:**

A HHS-wide medical well-being survey (n=124) was conducted 6 months after the implementation of the Medical Education and Well-being Registrar role was commenced in Wide Bay. Results showed a strong, positive correlation between the well-being strategies implemented at Bundaberg Hospital and perceived well-being of participants. Findings revealed the prevalence of burnout was 13% and professional fulfilment was 25%, compared to a median of 37% and 24% across the literature, respectively.

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