

PROJECT REPORT

Feedback on ARC Project Activities

Pacific Island TB Nurses Network Meetings

Each month the ARC Nurse Consultants meet online with the National TB Program (NTP) Staff of the US Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI) and the Division of TB Elimination at the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to present cases, discuss clinical issues, undertake educational activities and progress the development of NTP tools and resources. The monthly meetings are coordinated by ARC and hosted by the CDC. Each of the countries within the USAPI actively participate in the meetings and present cases for clinical discussion and review. The number of people attending the meetings within the countries increased over the year which is pleasing as the network continues to expand.

The ARC Nurse Consultants Group provide ongoing technical support, educational sessions and mentoring for the nurses and outreach workers of the USAPI TB Programs. The CDC provide funding for ARC to undertake these activities and support for the USAPIs.

Development of Information, Education and Communication Resources – TB Sputum Toolkit

Work continued on the development of the Sputum Toolkit for the TB Programs of the Northern Pacific this year. Collecting good quality specimens is essential for the diagnosis of people with TB and for monitoring a response to treatment and cure. The ARC Nurse Consultants Group has been working with the nurses from the USAPI and the CDC to develop the Toolkit.

The toolkit is made up of a series of resources that combined support clinical practice, training for health care workers and patient education. The resources include: a flipchart; health care worker training resources; guidelines and policies; competency standards and skill sets for nurses and a patient education resource.

In-country field testing and evaluation of the toolkit was to be completed in 2020, however, redeployment of USAPI staff to pandemic preparedness activities meant that there was a delay in completing the field testing in some of the countries. Work on the toolkit will be finalised in the first quarter of 2021.



Development of the Graduate Diploma/Master of Nursing (TB Management) Course

In 2020, ARC collaborated with the Western Sydney University, School of Nursing and Midwifery to develop and implement the Graduate Diploma/Master of Nursing (TB Management) Course. The course, the first of its kind internationally is seen as an important opportunity to further develop the speciality of TB nursing within Australia and enhance national efforts towards TB elimination. Nurses comprise the largest proportion of the Australian TB Program workforce, they are at the forefront of TB services and activities in Australia. Investing in education and skills development will enable TB Nurses of the future to further develop and implement effective TB programs. A strong training pathway will attract new nurses to the role and set the national TB program up for the future.

Kerrie Shaw was seconded to ARC to work on developing the three specialist units for the course: the Clinical Management of TB, the Public Health Management of TB and Care of People with TB units of study. ARC acknowledges Kerrie's expertise and outstanding contribution to the development and implementation of the course through academic writing and providing support for the students through the teaching team. Kerrie was assisted in this role by the ARC Nurse Consultants Group and a National Jurisdictional Reference Group.

In 2020, two of the three specialist units were available to students with four students completing the Clinical Management of TB unit of study and six students completing the Public Health management of TB unit of study. In 2021, all three units will be available for enrolment, there are currently 15 students enrolled in the Clinical Management of TB unit and 24 students enrolled in the Care and People with TB. The third unit, the Public Health Management of TB will be offered in mid-2021 with enrolments yet to commence.

In the coming year, ARC will meet with Western Sydney University, School of Nursing and Midwifery and other stakeholders to discuss opportunities to explore and scope the potential to offer the course internationally, and further develop workshops/stand alone courses that will increase access to tertiary learning in the speciality area of TB. Students from Australia and the Indo-Pacific Region are currently enrolled in the course. There is, however, capacity to identify opportunities to create a pathway and pipeline for nursing education that links other training and education activities that ARC is undertaking in the Pacific into an academic framework.

Funding to support the one-off course development costs were contributed from ARC and the Ministries of Health/Health Departments from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

Homeless and Vulnerable Grant

Over the past two years, ARC with the financial support of the Bowlers Club of NSW Ltd has implemented a project to support homeless and vulnerable people with TB within the Greater Sydney metropolitan