

PROGRAM DELIVERY AND ACCREDITATION OF NEW TRAINING COURSES

Across NSW Health, Health Service Learning and Development Centres will conduct training courses and assessment processes, and issue certificates up to and including Diploma level, while the NSW Department of Health continues to issue the Graduate Diploma in Applied Epidemiology through the NSW Public Health Officer's Training Program. The accreditation of new courses and re-accreditation of expired courses will be managed by the Health Learning and Development Managers Forum.

All training must feature competency-based learning outcomes and workplace assessment procedures, and be sourced from relevant National Training Packages.

Qualification of Trainers

As their minimum qualification, trainers responsible for the delivery and assessment of VETAB accredited training programs are required to have a Certificate in Assessment and Workplace Training (Table 2).

Issue of Qualifications

All certificates issued for course completion, following formal assessment procedures, are issued by the Health

Service Learning and Development Manager under delegation from NSW Health. All accredited training programs will be recognised for articulation to TAFE and University programs by the Health Learning and Development Managers Forum.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Ensuring consistency in standards across such a large and geographically diverse RTO remains a challenge. To this end, the Learning and Development Services of different areas periodically undertake peer audit for compliance to the ARF standards outlined in Table 1. A further challenge is forging a strategic vision for learning across NSW Health. In this regard, NSW Health must provide its staff with wider choices of VET qualifications, and greater access to a variety of learning pathways, to improve the workforce development necessary to drive changes in the way health care is delivered to the people of NSW. The aim is to provide the health workforce with choices from a suite of recognised qualifications delivered through a diversity of pathways and approaches to on-the-job learning, with in-built articulation to higher level qualifications. As a training provider, NSW Health has come a long way in the last decade. ■■

TINNITUS AWARENESS KIT FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Tinnitus is a condition with many causes, which is experienced as noises such as a ringing, hissing or booming in one or both ears. The condition has physical, psychological and social effects that can become distressing and severely disrupt the lives and personalities of tinnitus sufferers. In Australia, it is estimated that 11 per cent of the population has tinnitus,¹ while a total of 18 per cent of the population has had tinnitus at some stage.² However, only about 15 per cent of tinnitus sufferers present for treatment.³ In the United Kingdom, seven people in every 100 see their general practitioner with tinnitus as the primary cause of their visit.¹

Tinnitus is now becoming a specialised field in medicine, audiology,⁴ and psychology. A Tinnitus Awareness Kit has been produced by the Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW), to assist health professionals to better understand tinnitus; become aware of the different methods of relieving and coping with tinnitus; and learn about treatments that are available. The principle components of the Kit are:

- six information leaflets for the health professional;
- a tinnitus information handout for patients, with details of how to obtain further copies if required;
- a three-minute compact disc that plays 17 of the most common tinnitus noises;
- information on how to order books, videos, and tapes about tinnitus.

To obtain copies of the Tinnitus Awareness Kit please contact the Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW) by mail: PO Box 660, Woollahra, NSW, 1350; by telephone: (02) 8382 3331 or 8382 3338; by facsimile: (02) 8382 3333; or by email: info@tinnitus.asn.au. Further information about tinnitus, self-help groups, useful links, an awareness kit for teachers, an interactive site for kids, and the work of the Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW), can be obtained from the ATA Web site at www.tinnitus.asn.au.

REFERENCES

1. Epidemiology Branch, South Australian Department of Human Services. Australian Population Study of Hearing Impairment. *Tinnitus: what's new and what works*. Sydney: Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW), March 2000.
2. Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW). *Brief information about tinnitus—we hope it helps*. Sydney: Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW), 2000.
3. Curotta J. *Rethinking Tinnitus*. Sydney: Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW), March 2000.
4. Celine McNeill. *Tinnitus, hearing loss and hearing aids*. Sydney: Australian Tinnitus Association (NSW), March 2000.