

TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2009

## GP SET FOR TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIP TO US

A Northern Territory GP will travel to the United States to research ways of improving refugees' access to health services, thanks to a \$15,000 grant from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute based at ANU.

Dr Danielle Butler is the recipient of the 2009 APHCRI/Robert Graham Center Visiting Fellowship and will spend six weeks in the US from the end of October. She is a general practice registrar at the Wurli Wurlijang Aboriginal Medical Service in Katherine, Northern Territory, where she is involved in chronic disease management, disease prevention and health promotion programs.

Dr Butler was "absolutely thrilled" about the opportunity to use research tools and databases available at the Robert Graham Center in Washington DC to address ways of better meeting the health needs of refugees.

"Much like indigenous communities, refugees are a vulnerable group who face many barriers to accessing health care, which I have come to appreciate through my interactions with this community as a clinician and member of a refugee support group in Darwin," Dr Butler said. "Significant socio-economic barriers to accessing primary health care exist such as language, insurance status, cost of services, work conditions, ability to access transport and poverty."

While most of Dr Butler's experience has been in providing health services to Indigenous Australians in rural and remote areas, she has also provided outreach services to communities in countries such as Cambodia and Uganda.

"During a year-long post in Cambodia, I examined the role of capacity building of doctors for sustainable development, in the context of a rural primary health service."

Her long term goal is to work in remote and rural Australia, specifically the Top End of the Northern Territory, and in developing countries.

APHCRI Research Fellow Associate Professor Kirsty Douglas congratulated Dr Butler on being chosen for the APHCRI/Robert Graham Visiting Fellowship.

"Dr Butler is a deserving recipient of this fellowship which aims to provide emerging Australian GP researchers with international experience and mentoring at the Robert Graham Center," Professor Douglas said.

"We expect the experience will help develop her interest and skills in policy-relevant primary health care research. Australia needs to continue developing and mentoring our young academics."

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