

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Wednesday 4 February 2015

Simulated patient program provides life-saving skills

A University of Tasmania health training program is aiming to better equip student doctors in performing sensitive physical examinations.

The University's School of Medicine (Faculty of Health) is recruiting for specialised simulated patients, or Clinical Teaching Associates (CTA), to help support the Hobart-based program.

A simulated patient is a man or woman recruited from the community and given training to assist third-year student doctors in performing sensitive physical examinations.

The simulated patient undergoes genital and other physical examinations, and provides feedback to student doctors on appropriate technique and communication skills.

Participants are carefully selected and interviewed before given training and support, both before and during the program.

"Physical examinations play a vital role in diagnosis, they are life-saving skills," Hobart Clinical School Associate Head Professor Richard Turner said.

"Conditions such as cancers of the breast, cervix, prostate and bowel are common causes of death in Australia; early and accurate diagnosis is essential to ensure optimal treatment outcomes.

"It is essential our student doctors are trained across all areas of medicine, including being skilled and comfortable in performing sensitive physical examinations."

Simulated patients work within the School's Human Simulation Program and are also paid for their time.

"Our simulated patients are a great asset to our teaching program and provide encouragement towards the students' knowledge, confidence and expertise," Professor Turner said.

"They are a direct link with the local community, and support quality learning and teaching experiences to help equip the next generation of doctors.

“Some patients have also become part of the program after a family member has become ill, as they want to give something back to the profession.”

For more information on the program please contact Anne Barker at the Faculty’s School of Medicine, 6226 4786 or email Anne.Barker@utas.edu.au

Information released by:

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phone: 6226 2210/0439 665 734

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au