

## **Postgraduate Diploma in Primary Care Nursing**

### **1. Background**

In the 2002 Commonwealth budget, funding was allocated to support the employment of Practice Nurses (PNs). This funding was extended in the 2005 budget and included an allocation to support the training of PNs in key areas including cervical screening and chronic disease management.

There are currently at least 900 PNs working in general practice in Victoria. The Department of General Practice has widely recognised expertise in women's health research, in women centred clinical care and research on the management of chronic diseases.

A Postgraduate Certificate in Women Centred Clinical Care (to be renamed Postgraduate Certificate in Primary Care Nursing) has been developed and was offered for the first time in 2004. There are 8 Practice Nurses enrolled in this course, 39 have successfully completed one of the core subjects and a further 16 are currently undertaking a core subject. The School of Nursing expects a number of those nurses who have completed the core subject to elect to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in 2006.

The new Postgraduate Diploma would enable health professionals to provide more comprehensive and evidence based care in the significant areas of sexual and reproductive health, youth health and chronic conditions. At the same time it would teach strategies for health promotion in a primary care setting. Commonwealth government policy priorities in primary health care include an enhanced role for the practice nurse and this has been recognised in the various funding initiatives offered and in the creation of scholarships for these nurses to train in areas of need. Due to their geographical location and work commitments, most of this cohort would not be able to access a program offered on-campus.

### **2. Entry Requirements**

1. The Selection Committee will evaluate the applicant's ability to pursue successfully the course using the following criteria-
  - (a) an undergraduate degree in nursing, or equivalent, and at least two years of professional experience in a clinical setting; or
  - (b) a Postgraduate Certificate in Women Centred Clinical Care
2. The Selection Committee may conduct interviews or tests and will call for reports from at least two professional referees to elucidate any of the matters referred to above.

### **3. Course/Program Structure**

Eleven 12.5 point subjects are to be offered from which students choose eight subjects for the Postgraduate Diploma.

#### *Year 1/2 Semester 1*

- 585-890 Taking a Pap test: Theory and Practice
- 585-891 Significant Issues in Women's Health
- 505-883 Sexually Transmissible Infections
- 585-895 Diabetes Management in Primary Care
- 585-897 Youth Health in Primary Care

*Semester 2*

- 585-892 Responding to Women in Primary Care.
- 585-893 Communicating with Women in Primary Care
- 585-894 Asthma Management in Primary Care
- 505-884 Sexual and Reproductive Health
- 585-896 Promoting Health in Primary Care
- 514-831 Research and Evaluation for Practice

**4. Availability of Course**

The course will only be available on a part-time basis by a combination of distance education and on-campus