Preparation to Transition into Remote PHC Nursing

RAHC’s mission statement is to strengthen and support the Primary Health Care (PHC) services of the Northern Territory (NT). To achieve, this it is important for us to ensure the registered nurses (RN) we present to clients have the appropriate skills and experience to transition quickly into the remote environment.

**RAHC responds to the needs of the health services and offers HPs who are appropriate for the particular clinic setting. It is important to appreciate that the health services make the final decision on the acceptance of a Health Professional (HP) for a placement.**

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### a) Do I have the skills and experience to transition into remote Primary Health Care Nursing?

To improve your prospects of being accepted for a placement by a health service, we recommend you consider the following approaches to supplement your current experience. Below is the minimum credentialing criteria:

- **Gain experience in 2 diverse clinical areas** - We would suggest a minimum of 6 months experience in areas such as Emergency, Medical, Surgical, Palliative or Aged Care, Paediatrics, General Practice or other Primary Health Care environments, Community Nursing and Rural Hospitals
- **Increase your clinical assessment skills** – head to toe including Ear, Nose, Throat, airways/lungs, chest/cardiac, skin conditions, renal, mental health, etc.
- **All nurses are expected to be able to Cannulate and Venepuncture**
- **You will be expected to safely and competently drive a manual 4 Wheel Drive ambulance in most remote clinic placements.**
- **Complete RAHC’s e-learning clinical modules relevant to remote Aboriginal health**

### b) What is my role when working in the remote clinics of the NT?

- **You will be directed by the Health Centre Manager regarding your position in the clinic and in most clinics you will be allocated a consult room and treat adults and children who attend the clinic. A remote setting is a diverse, unique and challenging environment on many levels clinically, culturally and emotionally.**
- **You are expected to work as a PHC nurse and in most of clinics you will be rostered to be on-call for emergencies.** For example see DoH on-call policy: [http://remotehealthatlas.nt.gov.au/on_call_expectations.pdf](http://remotehealthatlas.nt.gov.au/on_call_expectations.pdf)
- **If you are concerned about the on-call, we suggest to get experience in an emergency department to up-skill for managing trauma/emergency presentations e.g. chronic respiratory conditions, cardiac, paediatrics, burns and other trauma.**
- **Another great option is to do an emergency skills training course like the Remote Emergency Course (REC) through CranaPlus. Our website has information about REC and other courses which our clinical team has recommended for health professionals interested in pursuing a career in Remote Nursing: [http://www.rahc.com.au/links/continuing-professional-development/](http://www.rahc.com.au/links/continuing-professional-development/)**
- **You may also be confronted with maternity and or neonatal emergencies in remote, in this case we would recommend the Maternity Emergency Course (MEC) also through CRANAplus. Information on MEC is also on our webpage: [http://www.rahc.com.au/links/continuing-professional-development/](http://www.rahc.com.au/links/continuing-professional-development/)**
- **Be very clear of your scope of practice! Follow the health services policies and procedures. Many clinics do not have resident General Practitioners (GP) – they are nurse-run clinics.**
You will be required to work with the Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association (CARPA) manual – this is your reference manual and legal guidelines. You can now access the CARPA manual on-line. [http://www.carpa.org.au/drupal/node/16](http://www.carpa.org.au/drupal/node/16)

- In the Northern Territory, majority of the remote communities run on computer based systems instead of paper based systems. Some of these systems include Communicare and PCIS.
- RAHC does provide staff in a number of town clinics who have a higher capacity to support staff and we do attempt to place the health professional in a supported situation. Be aware that the high turnover of staff in the remote setting can often change the circumstances of a community/clinic ability to support a new to remote PHC nurse.

**I still want to work remote but don’t meet the criteria. Is there any other option for me if I am not credentialed with RAHC?**

Yes! Once you have gained the extra skills and/or experience suggested above for a remote clinical setting, RAHC would be delighted to assist you with your application to seek employment. Remember there are scholarships available through many professional nursing bodies, including RCNA, for which you can apply for assistance with training courses.

RAHC also has initiated a support program to assist new-to-remote Credentialed Registered Nurses. The RAHC Clinical Educator may be able to accompany you on your first placement to assist you in any clinical queries that you may have. This will include assisting you with any clinical questions and queries you may have as well as supporting you while you become well inversed with the CARPA manual.

Department of Health (DOH) offer longer term supported placement contracts to nurses who apply to their N2 and N3 positions. These positions are highly supported and the HP is not expected to do first on-call until deemed appropriate. You can contact DoH directly if you are interested in one of these positions or when they are offered through the year. [http://www.remoterecruitment.nt.gov.au/](http://www.remoterecruitment.nt.gov.au/)

There is a number of organisations and avenues that we recommend you explore as you pursue your interest in developing a career in Remote Indigenous Health.

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### CRANAplus

[www.crana.org.au](http://www.crana.org.au)

CRANAplus was founded in 1983 when 130 Remote Area Nurses from across Australia came together in Alice Springs to put remote health issues on the national agenda. General concern about the poor health status of people who live in remote areas and the inequities, quality and accessibility in services available to these Australians was and remains the catalyst for action. Visit Remote Area Nurse Competencies can also be located on the CRANAPlus website: [www.crana.org.au/105-remote-area-nursing-competencies.html](http://www.crana.org.au/105-remote-area-nursing-competencies.html)

### National Rural Health Students Network (NRHSN)

[www.nrhsn.org.au](http://www.nrhsn.org.au)

NRHSN provides a voice for students who are passionate about improving health outcomes for rural and remote Australians. The NRHSN offers multi-disciplinary networking, professional development and opportunities to raise community awareness of health issues. Funded by the Australian Government, the NRHSN is supported by Rural Health Workforce Australia.

### The Centre for Remote Health

[www.crh.org.au](http://www.crh.org.au)

The Centre for Remote Health aims to contribute to the improved health outcomes of people in remote communities of the Northern Territory and Australia, through the provision of high quality tertiary education, training and research focusing on the discipline of Remote Health.

### The Department of Health and Families Northern Territory (NT DHF)


The Department of Health and Families Northern Territory (NT DHF) offers a number of Remote Area Nurse Graduate positions annually.

### The Menzies School of Health Research

[www.menzies.ed.au](http://www.menzies.ed.au)

The Menzies School of Health Research is Australia’s leader in Indigenous and tropical health research. With its head office in Darwin, Menzies has been conducting research for 25 years. Menzies staff work hand in hand with communities throughout Australia and across the tropical region to our North.