

Media Release

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Free online eye health training modules

The first Australian free online training resources on eye health and diabetes was launched today in Alice Springs.

Developed by the Indigenous Eye Health Unit at the University of Melbourne (IEHU) and the Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC), the modules are provided free of charge on the RAHC website <http://www.rahc.com.au> for health professionals undertaking placements in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“Ongoing monitoring and timely treatment can prevent vision loss from diabetes and no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander can go for more than 12 months without an eye exam. The new eye health and diabetes e learning module is a critical step in ensuring these annual eye exams happen” said Professor Hugh R Taylor AC, Head IEHU

“Our already established Trachoma module has been outstandingly successful and we have recently updated it with information from the new national guidelines” Professor Taylor said.

The modules have been developed with financial support from the Aspen Foundation and CBM Australia. The modules have been developed to meet criteria for Continuing Professional Development programs with RACGP, ACRRM, OAA and APNA.

Indigenous adults are six times more likely to develop blindness than non Indigenous Australians and vision loss is 11% of the Indigenous health gap.

“The Aspen Foundation’s mission is to undertake life-changing healthcare through significantly reducing or eradicating key illnesses in the Australian community. It also aims to provide education for the sustainability of improved health practices,” said Craig Fitzgerald, CEO of the Aspen Foundation.

The launch of these free online learning modules represents a major contribution to that mission. We are delighted to have worked in partnership with the Remote Area Health Corps and with Professor Taylor and his team to bring them about,” he said.



Indigenous people with diabetes should have their eyes examined every year but research has shown that only 20% of Indigenous adults with diabetes have had an eye examination in the previous year. Currently available treatment such as laser therapy, when used in a timely fashion, is effective in preventing severe vision loss in up to 98% of cases.

Major General the Honourable Michael Jeffery, AC, AO(Mil), CVO, MC (Retd) launched the two eye health modules at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

For more information, contact Annie Rahilly (Media office): 9035 5380/0432 758 734
arahilly@unimelb.edu.au