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## Medical students get support to train in Mental Health First Aid

Up to 8,000 medical students will get access to mental health first aid training over the next 2 years under an agreement announced today between the Australian government and Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand.

The online training program has been specifically designed for medical students and teaches them about the risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems such as anxiety or depression, and where and how to get help. Students who participate in the program can then complete the second facilitated part of the training if they wish, to get MHFA accreditation lasting three years.

President of Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand, Professor Richard Murray, welcomed the funding saying Mental Health First Aid training is a valuable additional skill for students.

“Medical students themselves can be at risk of mental health issues, as can their friends and peers. Being able to recognise the signs that either they or someone around them might be in need of help and support, and how that can be accessed, can make all the difference.” Professor Murray said.

Medical students who participate in the training will have 12 months to complete the program, which is self-paced and includes case-based scenarios, videos, multiple choice quizzes and more.

“Completing the Mental Health First Aid course gave me the confidence to offer first aid for a mental health problem, or importantly to me, to a friend in crisis. It gave me greater insight into the stigma around mental health problems and knowledge that has assisted me personally and will continue to do so in my future. I am very grateful for the opportunity to undertake the course and look forward to incorporating my skills into my future career and life.” Said Griffith University medical student, Thaddeus McFarlane.

“This online teaching of foundational and practical first aid skills is a very useful addition to the health and wellbeing support services that are available to students at their medical school. With the heightened level of anxiety and stress that our students have been under with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting their studies and clinical training, this support has never been more needed” Said Professor Murray.

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