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MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Filling gaps in blood pressure care: Victorian Pharmacist awarded prestigious national Fellowship

Improving blood pressure control in people with cardiovascular disease using primary care collaboration is the goal of Mr Kevin Mc Namara, who has just received a NICS Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), co-sponsored by the National Prescribing Service (NPS).

Mr Mc Namara, a lecturer in Pharmacy Practice at the Victorian College of Pharmacy, Monash University, will use the NICS-NPS Quality Use of Medicines Fellowship to undertake a two-year implementation project to develop and deliver a professional development program to community pharmacists. The program will help them identify and educate people with high blood pressure to better manage their condition.

“Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death in Australia. High blood pressure (hypertension) is a major risk factor and there is strong evidence that controlling it can reduce risk significantly, but many people with hypertension are either unaware of their condition or not receiving optimal treatments.” explains Mr Mc Namara.

“Community pharmacists have an important role to play in working with other primary care providers in this area. They are ideally placed to provide targeted screening and medication assessments and can also provide dietary and other lifestyle modification advice. I’ll be using my NICS-NPS Fellowship to develop and deliver strategies to help community pharmacists fulfil this role.”

NHMRC Chief Executive Officer, Professor Warwick Anderson has welcomed this opportunity: “We congratulate Mr Mc Namara and look forward to working with him in this important area of cardiovascular health. We’re particularly excited by the opportunity to partner with the National Prescribing Service.”

Mr Mc Namara will join nine other health professionals from Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia as 2008 NICS Fellows.

Release ends.

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For more information about the other NICS Fellows and the NICS Leadership Program :
www.nhmrc.gov.au/nics

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Note to editors

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is Australia's peak body for supporting health and medical research. As part of the NHMRC, the National Institute of Clinical Studies (NICS) works to improve health care by getting health and medical research into practice.

The NICS Leadership program, which was launched in 2003, directly contributes to closing evidence-practice gaps by supporting health professionals to undertake practical projects that aim to improve health outcomes for people by getting high quality evidence into everyday clinical practice in particular health settings.

The two-year, part-time Fellowships are open to early- to mid-career health professionals across the health care spectrum, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics, health care managers, and policy makers.

The Fellowships provide an annual stipend as well as professional development opportunities, training programs in evidence implementation, mentorship, and opportunities to network with and learn from world-class experts who come to Australia as part of NICS' Visiting Experts program.

Applications for NICS Fellowships 2009 open at the end of May 2008.

National Prescribing Service (NPS) is a member-based organisation providing accurate, balanced, evidence-based information and services to health professionals and the community on Quality Use of Medicines (QUM). NPS is independent, non-profit and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

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