

Australian Medical Association Limited

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



DOCTOR, SOLDIER, HUMANITARIAN WINS AMA AWARD

AMA Doctor in Training of the Year Award
2018 AMA NATIONAL CONFERENCE - #amanatcon
QT Canberra, 25-27 May 2018

An Army captain with a passion for the health of the people of the South Pacific and for the welfare of her junior colleagues has been named the AMA Doctor in Training of the Year 2018.

Dr Mikaela Seymour, a general surgical principal house officer at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, graduated from Griffith University in 2015 with a Masters of Medicine.

AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said that Dr Seymour had built up an impressive record of community service and advocacy at such an early stage of her career.

“Dr Seymour somehow manages to combine her hospital work with her role as an associate lecturer at the University of Queensland, her service with the Australian Army as a Captain in the 2nd Health Support Company at Gallipoli Barracks, and volunteer work in remote Papua New Guinea,” Dr Gannon said.

“Alongside all this, she is currently undertaking her Masters of Surgical Sciences at the University of Edinburgh.

“Dr Seymour is also a member of the AMA Queensland Council of Doctors in Training (AMAQCDT), chairs the Junior Medical Officers Forum of Queensland, is a previous deputy chair of the Australasian Junior Medical Officers Committee, sits on the Medical Workforce Advisory Committee to the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, and is on the Hospital Accreditation Committee for Queensland Prevocational Medical Education.

“Her busy schedule started early - not only was she the president and treasurer of the Griffith University Medical Society, she was also the secretary of the Queensland Medical Students Council, and a student representative on AMAQ Council.

“At the same time, she completed the Longlook Rural Education Program, and was an Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) Rural Placement Scholar. “It’s no wonder that, upon graduation, Dr Seymour was awarded the Dean’s Prize for Contribution to the Community.

“In her final year at Griffith University, she was selected for the Queensland Rural Medical Education Placement to Western Province, the largest and most remote province in Papua New Guinea.

“The experience impressed upon her the need for timely surgical access as a fundamental universal health care right, regardless of location.

“She has returned to Papua New Guinea five times to volunteer as a doctor in training, studying alongside PNG specialists and volunteering on the YWAM medical ship, delivering primary health care to some of the most remote villages of PNG.

“Dr Seymour also supervises University of Papua New Guinea medical students during their rural placements.

“While volunteering at Kiunga District Hospital, Dr Seymour was shocked by the impact that critically low anti-malarial supplies were having on patient treatment.

“In 2017, she coordinated a malaria prescription service and record database of anti-malarial use. This simple intervention has been proved over the past year to have a real clinical impact on patient outcomes, and is now supported financially by Rotarians Against Malaria.

“In December 2017, Dr Seymour was selected by the Lowy Institute, with support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), to attend the Australia-Papua New Guinea Young Leaders Dialogue in Port Moresby to lead the discussion on health issues, specifically the shared health risks and evolving non-communicable disease burden facing both countries.

“In addition to her humanitarian work, Dr Seymour is a passionate advocate for junior doctor quality supervision and training, and for the wellbeing of doctors in training.

“She helped coordinate the AMAQCDT 2017 Resident Hospital Health Check, which surveyed 465 doctors in training in Queensland, and has been used as a tool for prevocational doctor advocacy, particularly regarding bullying and harassment.

“In the words of the 12 junior doctors who signed their names to Dr Seymour’s nomination for this award, the AMA is at its best when it represents the youngest of its profession and the most vulnerable patients in Australia.

“Dr Seymour is the purest example of a young leader within our ranks who advocates for the welfare and training of her junior colleagues, and provides care to those less fortunate.

“She conducts herself with the greatest humility and represents an individual who deserves much greater endorsement for the work she quietly undertakes.”

Dr Seymour was presented with her award by Dr John Zorbas, the chair of the Federal AMA Council of Doctors in Training, at the Leadership Development Dinner at the AMA National Conference in Canberra last tonight.

**** Dr Seymour is available for interview****

26 May 2018

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

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AMA DOCTOR IN TRAINING OF THE YEAR AWARD 2018 FULL CITATION

DR MIKAELA SEYMOUR MD, B. Med Sci

Further to the advertised nomination for the AMA DiT of the Year Award, we would like to nominate Dr Mikaela Seymour. Dr Seymour is a Queensland principal house officer in general surgery, an advocate for quality supervision and training for doctors in training, and a young humanitarian passionate about the health of the South Pacific.

1. Introduction

An AMA member since starting medical school in 2011, Dr Seymour is a strong believer in the power of solidarity and teamwork among doctors and is held in high regard by her colleagues.

Graduating from Griffith University in 2015 with a Masters of Medicine, she is currently undertaking her Masters of Surgical Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. Dr Seymour is the past president and treasurer of the Griffith University Medical Society, as well as serving as the secretary of the Queensland Medical Students Council and sitting on the AMAQ Council as a student representative. This was whilst completing the Longlook Rural Education program and being an ACRRM John Flynn Rural Placement Scholar. Upon completion of her Medical Degree she was awarded the Dean's Prize for Contribution to the Community.

Mikaela was previously selected for the Queensland Rural Medical Education Placement to Western Province PNG, and has continued to volunteer in Papua New Guinea, returning five times since 2015 to volunteer as a Doctor in Training. She has been recognized by the Lowy Institute as a Young Leader in the South Pacific, attending the Aus-PNG Dialogue in 2017.

Mikaela is current chair of the Junior Medical Officers Forum of Queensland, and previous deputy chair of the Australasian Junior Medical Officers Committee. She currently sits on the Medical Workforce Advisory Committee to the Office of the Chief Medical Officer and the Hospital Accreditation Committee for Queensland Prevocational Medical Education.

Dr Seymour is an associate lecturer at the University of Queensland and a Medical Educator with Queensland Rural Medical Education. She also serves with the Australian Army as a Captain in the 2nd Health Support Company, Gallipoli Barracks.

2. Dr Seymour, a humanitarian for the health of the South Pacific

Dr Seymour has always had an interest in Global Health but felt it conflicted with her passion for surgery which she erroneously thought could only be delivered well in urban, tertiary settings. It wasn't until she was selected for the Queensland Rural Medical Education Elective placement scholarship to Western Province, Papua New Guinea, in 2015 that she was able to see the need for timely surgical access as a fundamental Universal Health Care right regardless of location.

Since then Mikaela has returned to Papua New Guinea five times as a volunteer doctor in training. She has studied alongside Papua New Guinean specialists, volunteered on the YWAM medical ship delivering primary health care to some of the most remote villages of PNG, as well as having the privilege of supervising UPNG medical students on their rural placements. She is particularly interested in Malaria and TB and the surprising links these communicable diseases have with surgical presentations.

In 2017, she had the privilege of coordinating a Malaria Prescription service for North Fly referral centre, Kiunga District Hospital. Whilst volunteering there she was shocked by the impact critically low

anti-malarial supplies were having on patient treatment and was invited to lead a project to implement a prescription service and record database of AntiMalarial use. This program is now going strong 12 months later, having been recognized and supported by Rotarians Against Malaria. Whilst visiting the hospital in April 2018, Mikaela was overwhelmed at the real clinical impact this simple intervention is having and is pleased to have been able to lay the foundations for this program. She is also honoured to be a Medical Educator with Queensland Rural Medical Education, assisting in the supervision of Medical Students as they travel to Kiunga to complete their medical electives in PNG.

In December of 2017, she was selected by the Lowy Institute with the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to attend the Australia-Papua New Guinea Young Leaders Dialogue in Port Moresby to lead the discussion on health issues (with Dr Patrick Koliwan, UPNG), specifically the shared health risks and evolving noncommunicable disease burden facing both countries.

3. Dr Seymour, an advocate for junior doctor quality supervision and training

Dr Seymour is the current chair of the Junior Medical Officers Forum of Queensland, prevocational doctor subgroup of Queensland Prevocational Medical Accreditation and is particularly passionate about transparency for doctor-in-training data and workforce planning in Queensland.

She sits on the Queensland Accreditation Committee as Junior Doctor Representative, and is a member of the foundation committee for the pilot of PGY2+ Accreditation in Queensland. With the executive of the JMOFQ, Mikaela is passionate about expanding accreditation of Prevocational Doctor training positions to provide an avenue of accountability to hospitals employing doctors in training and continues to work towards this.

She currently represents Queensland Prevocational doctors in the Medical Workforce Advisory Committee and the Medical Schools Liaison Committee, committees of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, advocating for Prevocational Doctors interests and patient safety in respect to quality training and supervision of junior doctors.

Mikaela is an associate lecturer at the University of Queensland, supervising medical students for clinical placement, receiving positive feedback about her quality of teaching. She is also a medical educator with Queensland Rural Medical Education, with a focus on Public Health and the South Pacific, supervising medical students on their elective placements within Papua New Guinea.

4. Dr Seymour, passionate about the wellbeing of junior doctors

Dr Seymour is also a passionate member of her AMA Queensland Council of Doctors in Training and had the honour of coordinating the Resident Hospital Health Check in 2017 (with Dr Thomas Crookes and Dr Alex Robinson). This project surveyed 465 doctors in training in Queensland and has been used as a tool for prevocational doctor advocacy, especially regarding Bullying and Harassment.

She was deputy chair of the Australasian Junior Medical Officer Committee in 2017, cohosting the Australia-New Zealand Prevocational Medical Education Forum in Brisbane. At this conference she had the privilege of organising the opening plenary, a debate on Junior Doctor Resilience, bringing together some of the brightest Doctors in Training from across Australia.

Mikaela was also the member of the PGY2+ pilot Accreditation Committee, assisting in the drafting of accreditation standards which would see Wellbeing, including protection from bullying and harassment, as an enforceable accreditation standard for hospitals employing prevocational doctors.

Mikaela has presented at ANZPMEF conference regarding the outcomes and perceptions of the AMAQ Resident Hospital Health Check and her Quality Improvement Project on the survey tools used to collect intern feedback prior to the accreditation of Hospitals with Doctors in Training. This tool has now been adopted for use across Queensland to increase the efficacy of Pre-Vocational doctor

involvement in the accreditation of intern positions and has received positive feedback from Doctors in Training who have used in thus far this year.

She has been published by the AUS-PNG Network, and the International Development Policy Blog, with her publications focusing on the Workforce planning advocacy for PreVocational doctors in the South Pacific, particularly the lack of focus on the vocational training bottleneck.

5. Final word

“I am still trying to wake up the world and tell people about the women we treat. To think that this injury is still happening when we have so much in medicine! I can’t turn my back on these poor women, and it warms my heart when I see Australians supporting this work.”

Dr Catherine Hamlin, The Weekend Australian Magazine, 2018

As a young doctor, Dr Catherine Hamlin began serving the people of Ethiopia. Over 60 years on, she treated more than 55,000 women suffering from obstetric fistula and founded the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. As junior doctors, we see many of the qualities that we admire in Dr Catherine Hamlin, shining through our young colleague, Dr Mikaela Seymour.

The Australian Medical Association is an organisation that is best when it represents the youngest of its profession and the most vulnerable patients of Australia. Dr Seymour is the purest example of a young leader within our ranks that advocates for the welfare and training of her junior colleagues and provide care to those less fortunate. She conducts herself with the greatest humility and represents an individual that deserves a much greater endorsement for the work she quietly undertakes.

In writing this nomination, we were inundated with stories and examples of Dr Seymour’s work in all facets of her life from around Australia and in the South Pacific. We are just a dozen of the hundreds of junior doctors from all parts of Australia that have both benefited from her advocacy and have been touched by her humanity and wish to jointly nominate her for this title. Together, we are proud to call Dr Seymour a colleague and offer our strongest possible endorsement for Dr Mikaela Seymour for the title of the AMA Doctor-in-Training for 2018.

Signed,

Dr Brian Fernandes, Medical Registrar, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Dr John Leou, Critical Care SRMO, Royal Melbourne Hospital

Dr Tom Crookes, Orthopaedic Principal House Officer, Sunshine Coast University Hospital

Dr Nicky Betts, Medical Registrar, Royal North Shore Hospital

Dr Alex Hanson, GP Registrar, Inala Indigenous Health Centre of Excellence

Dr Alex Robinson, Critical Care SRMO, Cairns Hospital

Dr Sophie Manoy, Mental Health RMO, Cairns Hospital

Dr Hash Abdeen, Medical Registrar, Gold Coast University Hospital

Dr Hannah Szewczyk, Obstetrics and Gynaecology RMO, Flinders Medical Centre

Dr Justin Azzopardi, Anaesthetics Principal House Officer, Redlands Hospital

Dr Amelia Chowdhury, Medical Registrar, St Vincent’s Hospital Darlinghurst

Dr Ian Anderson, PHO Sexual and Public Health, Cairns Hospital Health Service

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