

Media Release

New drug service to tackle methamphetamine use in Avon Valley

23 August 2017

In a first for regional WA, a specialised treatment and support service is being trialed to help individuals and families in the Avon Valley impacted by methamphetamine use.

More than half a million dollars of Australian Government funding has been invested in the Northam-based service, commissioned by the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) and delivered by Holyoake Wheatbelt Community Alcohol and Drug Service.

Federal Member for Pearce, Christian Porter, said this much-needed service is part of the Federal Government's response to the National Ice Taskforce report, which included \$20 million over three years for new alcohol and other drug treatment services in Western Australia.

"Most people don't use methamphetamine, however for those that do and experience problems, it is a drug that can cause significant harm," Mr Porter said.

"Demand for methamphetamine treatment services in Northam and surrounding areas has grown over the past year. For the first time, the number of people accessing treatment for methamphetamine locally has exceeded that of alcohol and we know that it is of concern to the community.

"It is encouraging to know that people are seeking help and this dedicated, specialist service will be a welcome addition to supporting those that need it. I look forward to seeing the benefits."

WAPHA Regional Manager Fiona Bush said the new service will provide improved access to treatment and support for individuals and their families in Northam and surrounding towns.

"This is a great step towards delivering effective treatment services and is an opportunity to trial a comprehensive response to users of methamphetamine and other drugs."

Ms Bush said the evidenced-based approach will support sustained recovery and it's hoped that the positive outcomes may result in a further expansion of the model throughout the state. Holyoake Chief Executive Officer Angie Paskevicius said the service will have a long-term focus on supporting people.

"This initiative acknowledges that support for methamphetamine use requires a customised approach that is holistic, intensive and sustained to better meet the needs of individuals and their families," Ms Paskevicius said.

People can self-refer or they can be referred by their GP to Holyoake's multidisciplinary specialist methamphetamine team based in Northam.

Holyoake will trial the new service until 30 June 2018, with evaluation being conducted by the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University.

As well as improving services to address methamphetamine use, WAPHA remains focused on increasing supports for those experiencing problems related to alcohol and other drugs including medication.

Strategies include building the capacity of primary care to intervene earlier, and improving access to specialist treatment services such as those provided by Holyoake.

Individuals concerned about their own use of methamphetamines or those concerned about someone they care for can contact Holyoake on 9621 1055 or adminnortham@holyoake.org.au

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About WAPHA

WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes.

For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au