

Minimum pricing is the first step to reducing harm from alcohol

12 October 2018

The WA Primary Health Alliance is committed to reducing harm from alcohol in our community and supports the WA Alcohol and Youth Coalition’s case for minimum pricing.

Excluding tobacco, alcohol causes the most drug related harm in the WA community. Limiting access to cheap alcohol is the first step in reducing the harm alcohol causes young people and heavy drinkers.

WA Primary Health Alliance CEO Learne Durrington says a minimum floor price would be highly effective in reducing harm but needs to be part of the bigger picture.

“As outlined in [the report](#) released by the WA Coalition this week, there is strong and consistent evidence that reducing alcohol related harm in the community starts with reducing the availability of cheap alcohol.

“But we also need to raise awareness of what at risk drinking looks like and change attitudes towards alcohol consumption by the community as a whole,” Ms Durrington said.

“It’s also important to reduce our exposure to alcohol advertising, particularly for young people, and increase access to community based early intervention and treatment programs.”

WA Primary Health Alliance is focused on building the capacity of primary care to respond to problematic use of alcohol and improving access to specialist treatment services for those that need it.

This includes the provision of support for increased screening and brief intervention by health professionals, education and training for GPs to recognise and respond to alcohol and other drug use and commissioning a range of alcohol and other drug services for people in the community.

The report from the WA Alcohol and Youth Action Coalition, *The Case for a Minimum (Floor) Price for Alcohol in Western Australia* was released Tuesday and is available online at <https://mcaay.org.au/publications.aspx>

Key Facts *

- Alcohol is the most prevalent drug used in WA and causes the most drug-related harm (excluding tobacco) in the community.
- In WA, more than half of all domestic and more than a third of all non-domestic assaults are alcohol related.
- Based on various national and international studies, it is estimated that at least 20 to 50 per cent of people with an alcohol or other drug problem also have a co-occurring mental illness.
- There is frequently an increase in alcohol and other drug use in the period before a person suicides.

*Source: Western Australian Mental Health Commission (2015). *Better Choices, Better Lives, Mental Health., Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015 – 2025.*

WA Primary Health Alliance is funded by the Australian Government through the PHN Program.

ENDS

WA Primary Health Alliance Media Contact - Fiona Clark, 0437 563 735, fiona.clark@wapha.org.au

About WAPHA: WA Primary Health Alliance 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