



Monday, 26 September 2011

Alcohol and Drug Service

Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards

I am pleased to announce that the Hon. Michelle O'Byrne, Minister for Health will release the new draft **Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards (TOPP)** for external appraisal and feedback on the 3rd October 2011.

The policy has been developed to address a number of clinical and population health concerns, including: high rates of opioid abuse and dependence in Tasmania (in particular prescribed medications); a number of deaths as a result of opioid abuse and dependence (identified by The Coroner); and inconsistencies in the delivery of opioid pharmacotherapy.

The TOPP will provide the policy framework and clinical practice standards for the treatment of opioid dependence in Tasmania. Alcohol and drug services and private practitioners offering opioid pharmacotherapy will be required to provide this treatment in a manner consistent with the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards (2011).

This important document will ensure that individuals and their families, affected by opioid dependence, receive high quality, contemporary, safe and effective treatment that will allow them to improve their quality of life.

A copy of the draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards (TOPP) will be made available at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/mentalhealth/alcohol_and_drug_from_3_October_2011.

Features of the draft Tasmania Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards

The draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards contains the following features:

- Detailed policy requirements and clinical practice standards to support clinicians in the delivery of opioid pharmacotherapy in Tasmania;
- Increased clinical safety of clients receiving opioid pharmacotherapy in Tasmania through careful assessment and management of risk and protective factors; and
- Builds on the current evidence base, broadening treatment approaches to include a focus on psychosocial interventions for clients with complex needs.

External Appraisal and Feedback

The External Appraisal and Feedback process is not a broad and traditional consultation process. The draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards incorporates regulatory aspects of clinical service delivery and establishes clinical practice standards. This means that there are a number of aspects of this treatment program that cannot be modified or altered. For this reason it has been determined that a feedback and appraisal process will be undertaken.

As this document informs the delivery of a specific clinical treatment program, it requires a level of clinical knowledge or personal experience; therefore, key stakeholders have been identified for participation in the appraisal and feedback process. Key stakeholders include individuals receiving treatment services and their families, health professionals and services (government and community sector organisations) directly or indirectly involved in the delivery of opioid pharmacotherapy or alcohol and drug services.

Providing feedback on the draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards

The external appraisal and review process is being undertaken to seek feedback from key stakeholders. Healthcare professionals, advocacy groups and independent oversighting bodies involved in the delivery of this program have been identified and invited to participate in this process. Feedback on the draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards is being sought.

To inform the finalisation of the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards, stakeholders are being asked to consider the following questions:

- How will the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards work in practice?
- How will the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards impact on clients and health care professionals involved in the delivery of the program?
- Will the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards help to minimise the risks and ensure the clinical safety of clients receiving opioid pharmacotherapy in Tasmania?
- Will the Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards adequately broaden the current treatment approaches for clients to include a focus on psychosocial and risk and protective factors?

The closing date for feedback is **Friday, 28 October 2011**.

I would strongly encourage you to consider the draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards and to take the time to provide feedback through one of the mechanisms outlined below

You can provide feedback in the following ways:

Written Feedback:

Written submissions can be emailed to adstopp@dhhs.tas.gov.au or posted to:

TOPP EXTERNAL APPRAISAL AND FEEDBACK
Alcohol and Drug Service
13 Mulgrave Street
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Online feedback:

You can provide feedback by completing the online survey at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/mentalhealth/alcohol_and_drug

Feedback in person:

A series of community forums will be held around the State. Details of the forums are provided below. To express your interest in attending please email adstopp@dhhs.tas.gov.au or phone (03) 6336 5577.

Launceston

Date: Tuesday, 25th October 2011 Time: 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Venue: TBA, Launceston

Ulverstone

Date: Wednesday, 26th October 2011 Time: 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Venue: TBA, Ulverstone

Hobart

Date: Thursday, 27th October 2011 Time: 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Venue: TBA, Hobart

Following the Feedback Process:

The new Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards present significant changes in the way that opioid pharmacotherapy is delivered in Tasmania. Your feedback is important to ensuring the Policy will work in practice.

All feedback received during the external appraisal and feedback process will be carefully considered and the draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards will be amended as necessary. A report on the external appraisal and feedback process will be made available in late November 2011.

The Tasmania Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards will then be launched and implemented in early 2012.

If you have any questions about providing feedback or about any aspect of the draft Tasmanian Opioid Pharmacotherapy Policy and Clinical Practice Standards please email adstopp@dhhs.tas.gov.au or call Anita Reimann, Manager Clinical Practice Development and Performance, Alcohol and Drug Service, on (03) 6336 5577.

Dr John Crawshaw
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