

STRENGTHENING THE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG SERVICE SYSTEM IN THE EAST TO IMPROVE CLIENT EXPERIENCES

BACKGROUND

While Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) agencies in the east are providing a number of high quality treatment services, opportunities for improvements were identified by the partnership. Across the region, inconsistencies exist in both service demand and waiting times. Factors identified as contributing to this inconsistency include the ineffective transfer and sharing of client information, limited referrals between services, and the impact of systematic changes due to re-commissioning and reform.

The Inner East Primary Care Partnership (IE PCP) was funded to work with AOD services in Inner and Outer Eastern Melbourne to improve the AOD service system.

This 2 year initiative aims to:

- Develop a shared understanding amongst local AOD services, of current referral patterns and the practice and system changes required to improve access for AOD clients.
- Achieve greater consistency in service referral, assessment and response to balance service use and capacity across the region.
- Use the consumer experience to guide the development and implementation of service system changes.
- Support agencies to undertake system level improvement strategies.
- Collaboratively develop a set of measures that will enable success to be monitored and evaluated.

PARTNERS

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Outer East Primary Care Partnership
- EMR AOD Planning Council
- Consumers of the AOD system (PEAK Consumer groups/committees)
- Eastern Health
- Access Health and Community
- Link Health and Community
- Inspiro
- Salvation Army – Salvocare Eastern
- SHARC
- EACH
- Anglicare

METHOD

In November 2017 CEOs, Executives and senior managers of state-funded AOD services came together to authorise the progression of a collaborative initiative to improve the AOD service system in the East.

In early 2018 the PCP engaged an independent consultant to conduct individual consultations with a range of AOD managers and staff to better understand some of the current service delivery and system challenges. A report was developed and the findings were presented at a stakeholder forum coordinated by the PCP in May 2018. From this forum four priority areas of work were identified:

1. Developing a consistent approach to care and recovery coordination

2. Improving promotion and client awareness of services
3. Workforce development
4. Improving information sharing and discharge planning.

Between July-September 2018 the PCP conducted a small scale consultation with people with lived experience to gain their insights into what it is like for them or their carers to locate, access, receive, use, and exit AOD services in the East. Feedback from both service provider and client perspectives were used to validate the key priorities for this initiative.

The first priority identified was Care and Recovery Coordination (CRC). The PCP brought stakeholders together to undertake a quality improvement process and use Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles to drive system and practice change, build trust, and foster the exchange of knowledge and experience.

Following six PDSA workshops the group has completed a range of agreed actions and PDSA workshops are now being coordinated to progress priorities 2 and 4.

OUTCOMES

AOD agencies across the Inner and Outer Eastern Melbourne:

- Increased their understanding of each service's capacity to provide CRC, the variations between services in how it is provided, and the different referral pathways and processes used.
- Have agreed on shared eligibility criteria, what activities will be provided as part of CRC and what will be recorded as a CRC contact.
- Have agreed on evaluation criteria to measure impacts on client access to CRC.

A participant survey indicates that the workshops:

- 89 % of participants agree that the workshops have helped the region align CRC activity,
- increased trust between agencies (78%),
- assisted clinicians to make decisions and embed decision-making processes into agencies systems (100%)
- facilitated collaborations that will lead to better health outcomes for clients (89%)
- and enhanced their ability to positively influence health and wellbeing outcomes for their clients

"The workshops have been really useful so far and we really appreciate the opportunity to get together and work on important issues with support from the project team." Partner

"The work that you are doing here is useful to our organisation as we are finalising a restructure This process and the information will be directly used in the updated the CRC Model...it will assist worker in the program to know the agreed process across the region and consortium about the role of CRC." Partner