



Drug and Alcohol services within JH&FMHN

Who are our patients

The health status of patients entering custody is generally poor, characterised by general neglect, substance use and mental illness. Interaction with the criminal justice system affords JH&FMHN the opportunity to provide health care to this largely marginalised group. In NSW, more than 22% of men and 34% of women in custody and 50% of detained adolescents are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In 2009, JH&FMHN conducted a comprehensive inmate health survey across NSW. In the twelve months prior to entering custody, 63% of men and 40% of women reported drinking alcohol in the hazardous and harmful range. High levels of current tobacco smoking were reported with 80% of women and 75% of men currently smoking. The majority of participants reported lifetime use of illicit drugs (78% women and 86% men), while 44% reported daily or near daily use of illicit drugs prior to incarceration. Forty-three per cent (43%) of participants reported using drugs in prison, and 17% reported injecting drugs in prison.

The incidence of problematic substance use among this population is significantly higher than in the general population. Incarceration is frequently related, either directly or indirectly, to the individual's substance use. This can be as a result of offences committed in order to obtain substances, or offences committed whilst under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

Prisoner populations are known for engaging in high risk behaviours, particularly injecting drug use. JH&FMHN is the largest public provider of Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST) in NSW, with approximately 1,400 patients on the OST program.

Drug & Alcohol services

Drug & Alcohol services provided by JH&FMHN include:

- Risk assessment and management of drug and/or alcohol intoxication and withdrawal for all patients entering the custodial system
- Pharmacotherapy treatment options as appropriate including; Methadone, Suboxone, (Buprenorphine in limited situations e.g. pregnancy), Naltrexone and Acamprosate
- Referral to CS NSW program staff who provide individual and group counselling, relapse prevention, education, placements in residential rehabilitation centres etc.
- Multidisciplinary management of patients with comorbid mental illnesses
- Multidisciplinary management of patients health issues related to their drug use e.g. Blood Borne Viruses
- Management of patients with chronic pain who have comorbid addiction issues
- Management of drugs in pregnancy to optimise maternal and neonatal health
- Consultation Liaison to Mental Health Screening Units, Mental Health Inpatients at Long Bay Hospital, Medical and Surgical Inpatients Long Bay Hospital
- Drug Court Program
- Compulsory Drug Treatment Program
- Post release support, ensuring continuity of care to the community through the Connections Program and the Drug and Alcohol Central Planning Office

- Specialist drug and alcohol education programs for generalist nurses and doctors
- Regularly host visits for overseas health and government delegations
- Staff Specialist on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide phone advice to JH&FMHN staff regarding the management of patients
- Accredited by Chapter of Addiction Medicine for AChAM trainees

Specialist Drug & Alcohol Programs

Connections Program

The Connections program provides an assertive coordinated approach to release planning for eligible patients And involves a team of clinical support workers based in correctional and community settings throughout NSW. The program operates within a strengths based, linkage model of care engaging patients with relevant health and welfare service providers. Participation in Connections is voluntary.

All participants have a comprehensive assessment and release plan developed prior to release. Participants are then assertively followed up in the community for a period of four weeks to assist with community integration. Some patients require minimal assistance, while others will require more intensive practical support e.g. attending appointments with participants in order to advocate or support the patient, crisis intervention, accessing housing, obtaining personal identification documents etc.

The Connections Program has received recognition at State and National Awards:

2014

Treasury Managed Funds Award - Innovative Process: Finalist Highly Recommended

2013

National Drug & Alcohol Awards -Excellence in Treatment and Support: Joint Winner (Connections is only the second NSW Health based service to be a recipient of the award)

Organiser: Alcohol and other Drug Council of Australia

Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards - National Winner: Recognition of Excellence

Organiser: The Australian Heads of Government and the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management

2012

NSW Premier's Public Sector Award - Delivering Quality Customer Services: Finalist

National Homelessness Services Achievement Awards - Excellence in the Preventions of or Early Intervention In, Homelessness: Highly Commended

2011

NSW Crime and Violence Prevention Awards- Certificate of Merit

Organisers: The Australian Heads of Government and the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management

2010

National Drug & Alcohol Awards -Excellence in Treatment and Support: Finalist

Organiser: Alcohol and other Drug Council of Australia

2009

NSW Health Awards - Creating Better Patient Journeys- Improving Access to Services to Improve Health and Reduce Recidivism: Finalist

NSW Premier's Public Sector Award -Delivering Services: Finalist

Compulsory Drug Treatment Program

The Compulsory Drug Treatment Program (CDTP) is an innovative abstinence focussed program that commenced in September 2006. There are up to 100 participants on the program at any one time. This program is available to males with long term dependence, who have committed multiple offences over a long period to support their addiction. It operates over three stages: Detention; semi-detention and supervision in a community setting. The program is similar to an intensive Drug and Alcohol residential rehabilitation program, except it operates within the correctional system instead of being a community based service. This program is jointly administered by CS NSW and JH&FMHN with CS NSW having the primary role of managing the program.

Drug Court Program

The Drug Court Program (DCP) is a court diversion program for drug dependent offenders. Its aims, goals and objectives are to reduce a person's dependency on drugs and therefore eliminate their need to commit crime to support their drug use. The DCP has expanded and now operates at Parramatta, Toronto and the Downing Centre Court in Sydney. This program is comprised of a multidisciplinary and multi-agency team with the Judge as the head of the team. The team that is based at the court is called the Drug Court Team and has members from the following departments: the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Police, Legal Aid, Community Compliance & Monitoring Group (CS NSW) and JH&FMHN.

The JH&FMHN component of this program works closely with five Local Health District, Drug Court Program teams and the three Court based teams, in the development of treatment plans and the management of participants of the DCP.

Research & Evaluation

The Drug and Alcohol stream has a strong commitment and focus on research and evaluation and works closely with Drug and Alcohol and health centre clinicians in implementing, maintaining and reviewing data collection and evaluation systems.

Clinical Supervision for Drug & Alcohol Staff

The Drug and Alcohol Clinical Nurse Consultants provide structured clinical supervision and mentoring, both in a group setting and on an individual basis to staff working in designated Drug and Alcohol roles. The aim of clinical supervision is to focus on the development of the supervisee specifically as an inter-personally, clinically effective professional.