



National Committee for Addiction Treatment

FACT SHEET

MARCH 2010

Alcohol and drug treatment is everybody's business

ACCESS TO TREATMENT

The current review of our key alcohol and drug legislation – the Sale of Liquor Act, the Misuse of Drugs Act and the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Act – all say the same thing:

- There is a significant shortage of alcohol and other drug treatment services available to New Zealanders.
- Our justice system does not provide adequate alcohol or drug treatment for those before the courts or in prison.
- Important opportunities for primary care practitioners to provide brief and early interventions for people with alcohol and drug problems are frequently missed.

"Many working in the alcohol and drug treatment field would argue that treatment needs to be seen as a process that provides an ongoing mix of different interventions and services, rather than a single point of engagement with one form of treatment or one programme. Typically a person suffering from dependence has to engage with a range of different treatment services over a number of years. For this reason easy access to well linked services is likely to offer the best potential for positive treatment outcomes."

**Controlling and regulating drugs:
NZ Law Commission 2009**

THE FACTS

- Serious alcohol and drug abuse and addiction affects 3.5% of New Zealanders each year and for youth aged 16 - 24 the figure rises to 9.6%.
- ALAC estimates that 29% of the population regularly consumes alcohol at levels that cause a high state of intoxication and results often in significant harm to people and their families.
- Misuse of alcohol and other drugs reduces our national productivity by 4 billion dollars each year.

- Every dollar invested in treatment saves the community \$5 in the long term.
- Alcohol and other drug problems are the sixth highest contributing factor to the burden of disease in New Zealand.



- There is currently no strong focus on using early and brief interventions to reduce the enormous cost associated with alcohol and drug misuse even though these interventions are effective.
- The alcohol and drug sector works hard and efficiently to minimise waiting times but it nevertheless struggles to meet the needs all those seeking treatment.
- Making alcohol and drug treatment a national priority will lessen the missed opportunities to cost effectively reduce many health and social issues.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT: A NATIONAL PRIORITY

Responding to the problems caused by alcohol and drugs is everybody's business. The alcohol and drug rehabilitation sector has an important contribution to make in this. Professionals in primary care, education, and justice settings also have a significant role to play.

Accessible and effective interventions are essential to develop robust treatment for all. Making interventions available at every point where people come into contact with health and social services or ask for help must become a national priority.

Treatment sector vision:

All New Zealanders have direct access to high quality alcohol and drug treatment services.

People working in health, justice and social services maximise every opportunity to provide brief interventions for alcohol and drug misuse.

Goals:

- Broaden the range of intervention options and points of access for the significant number of people who experience alcohol and drug related problems.
- Make sure that people most severely affected by alcohol and drug abuse have direct access to the treatment they need and do not face barriers.
- Build the capacity and capability of the workforce so they can respond to the needs of people presenting with alcohol and drug related problems.
- Expand the use of technology-based support services such as, telephone, texting and the internet (e.g. Alcohol Drug Helpline 0800 787 797).

Funding:

- Develop a national integrated funding strategy that ensures people are able to receive effective treatment no matter where they are or what their circumstances are.

Outcomes:

- People affected by alcohol and drugs are better able to care for their own and their family's wellbeing.
- Alcohol and drug treatment services are able to meet the needs of people and their families/whānau.
- Direct access to intensive addiction treatment services is easy to obtain.
- Support and crisis services are easily accessible.
- Access to interventions is flexible and co-ordinated across all regions.
- Upfront, screening and brief interventions are available within all primary care and justice settings.
- Self help and peer support initiatives are strongly supported by alcohol and drug rehabilitation services.
- Economic and social costs are greatly reduced.

WHO PAYS?

The New Zealand's alcohol and drug treatment sector often operates under multiple funding sources.

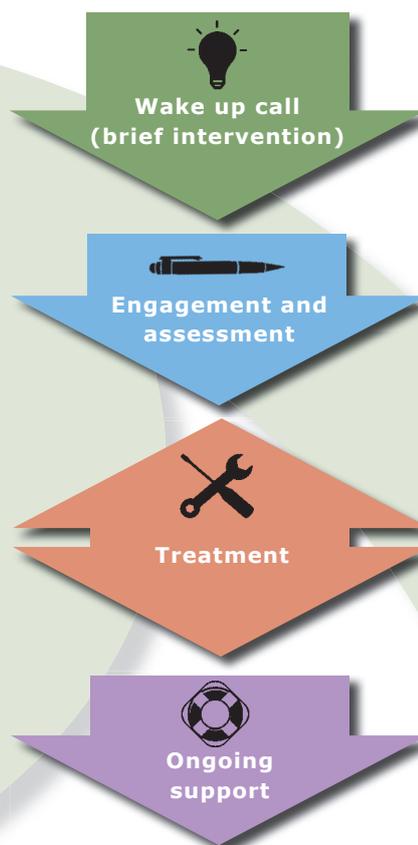
This creates a mass of conflicting rules, compliance and reporting requirements that focus on defining an ever narrowing target group rather than making treatment more widely available.

To significantly reduce alcohol and drug related harm in New Zealand the sector must have the support of DHB funders and planners, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development and the Department of Corrections to create intervention opportunities at all points of contact.

FUNDING INITIATIVES TO BUILD ON:

- Develop a simpler contract environment where all funding comes from one source.
- Reduce bureaucracy and duplication by standardising intervention approaches across all agencies.
- Fund primary care, justice and social services for the alcohol and drug interventions they provide.
- Fund effective training that empowers front line workers in justice, primary care, education and social services to effectively deliver screening and brief interventions.

HOW DO I ACCESS TREATMENT FOR MY ADDICTION? Pathway to recovery:



IN A NUT SHELL

- Set alcohol and drug addiction treatment as a national priority.
- Provide appropriate interventions at all points of contact.
- Significantly improve access to treatment.
- Build a confident and competent workforce.
- Create an integrated funding structure that reflects the importance of the issue.

*The report *Improving access to alcohol and other drug treatment (Rout, 2009)* helped inform this factsheet.



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for Addiction Treatment

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