

# Drug and Alcohol (D&A) networks

## D&A content at network meetings

- > MHPN generalist networks cover content about D&A and mental health during network meetings.  
*For example, the Peninsula Drug and Alcohol Program & Youth Services' senior psychologist clinician will present to five MHPN networks on the Mornington Peninsula to help to up-skill local clinicians about addiction.*
- > Clinical specialists in addictions often present at network meetings.  
*For example, Mt Gambier's generalist network will receive a presentation from a psychiatrist on "Chronic Schizophrenia and prescribing guidelines for Clozapine and metabolic monitoring". This meeting will look to engage local pharmacists with a view to encouraging them to become permanent network members. This network attracts a wide range of clinicians including GPs, psychologists, mental health nurses, social workers and other community mental health workers.*
- > MHPN has established six active specialist D&A practitioner networks, four of which are in Victoria.  
*The new Melbourne Specialist D&A Network has a strong strategic focus, with the coordinator committed to engaging service providers, private practitioners and other key stakeholders from the local area, such as the Medicare Local to improve referral pathways and raise the profile of the local D&A services.*
- > Some specialist networks choose to cover D&A as a related topic.  
*For example, the Brisbane LGBTI Network and the Adelaide HIV & Mental Health Network have found D&A content of interest to their members.*
- > MHPN's Guest Speaker Register provides a resource for networks looking for presenters. Of the 82 guest speakers, four identify D&A as areas of interest/specialty. This resource will be enhanced in 2014.

## Next steps . . . MHPN, mental health and D&A interface

- > MHPN plans to use the successful Victorian experience to establish specialist D&A networks in other states. The support of the peak/influential bodies has been key to success in rolling out networks with a specific focus. The peak bodies have provided MHPN with advice, support and effectively partnered in the establishment process. To date we have successfully employed this model in the areas of mental health and diabetes, and mental health and chronic pain.
- > MHPN will look to increase networks' access to guest speakers with expertise in addictions by increasing the number of presenters on our Guest Speaker register with this specialty. Technology will be employed where appropriate to provide rural and regional networks with access to specialist D&A presenters.
- > Producing a webinar with addictions content is currently being explored. The previous webinar 'Substance abuse presentations' attracted 293 online participants, with a further 850 downloads of the webinar recording from interdisciplinary practitioners across the country.