

BCH POSITION STATEMENTS

Date: 16/10/17



Pharmacotherapy

BCH Role

Ballarat Community Health is lead agency for Oricare Pharmacotherapy Network. We work closely with our partners in primary care, community health and alcohol and drugs treatment to deliver improved access to pharmacotherapy across the Grampians and Loddon Mallee regions – a geographic area covering more than a third of the state.

Key Messages

- Each year, more Victorians are dying from overdose involving opioid drugs or suffer from other harms associated with opioid use and dependence. Opioid drugs come in both natural and synthetic forms including codeine, heroin, morphine, oxycodone and fentanyl
- Pharmacotherapy, also known as opioid replacement therapy, is a treatment for opioid dependence endorsed by the World Health Organisation. It involves using long-acting opioids such as methadone or suboxone in a supervised daily dosing regimen, to enable the patient to stabilise their lives and address the impacts of their drug dependence. Some people only require a few months in treatment whereas others will wean slowly over a much longer period of time
- Several decades of evidence have shown pharmacotherapy to be an effective treatment that saves lives, reduces crime and prevents other drug-related health problems
- We have been successful in increasing the numbers of doctors and pharmacists who offer pharmacotherapy. We provide regular access to addiction specialist consultations which is the first service of its kind in these two regions. We continue to coordinate access to training, expert advice and practical support for health providers in this field, in addition to clinical networks and up-to-date news and information
- We also work to build the capacity of the health workforce in relation to harm-reduction and prevention. This includes promoting Hepatitis C screening and treatment, best practice management of chronic non-cancer pain, expansion of needle syringe programs and overdose response initiatives.

Ballarat Community Health provides direct service to professionals in this area. For more information contact:

- Jacqueline Keevins, Manager – Pharmacotherapy Network, on 5338 0511