

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Multicultural Affairs



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MORE ACCESS TO PHARMACOTHERAPY ACROSS VICTORIA

The Allan Labor Government is making sure Victorians seeking help for opioid dependence can access medical treatment, closer to home – with a new pharmacotherapy grants program.

Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt today announced the 15 community health services who will share in \$8.4 million to expand the availability of this life-changing addiction treatment.

Pharmacotherapy is the use of medication (such as methadone and buprenorphine) to help treat opioid dependence and is an essential part of Victoria’s efforts to reduce drug harm, with around 15,000 Victorians using pharmacotherapy each day.

Until now, pharmacotherapy services have largely been provided by GPs, nurse practitioners and state-funded clinics across Victoria – making these new grants for community health services a critical tool in filling service gaps by providing these services where they are needed most.

Funding will be provided over three years to the following metro and regional community health services:

- Ballarat Community Health
- Barwon Health
- Bendigo Community Health Services
- DPV Health
- Echuca Regional Health
- Gateway Health
- Gippsland Lakes Complete Health
- Goulburn Valley Health
- Grampians Community Health
- Latrobe Community Health Service
- Monash Health
- Peninsula Health
- South West Healthcare
- Western Health
- Your Community Health

Making pharmacotherapy accessible at these services will mean up to an additional 1,500 Victorians will be able to undertake this life-changing treatment – adding to the more than 40,000 Victorians accessing help through the various state-funded alcohol and drug treatment and support services each year.

The grants are part of the Labor Government’s \$95 million Statewide Action Plan to reduce drug harms, which includes a further \$7.2 million investment to deliver Victoria’s first hydromorphone trial and the establishment of 20 naloxone vending machines.

It will also see a trial of Victoria’s first overdose prevention and response helpline, the appointment of Victoria’s first Chief Addiction Medicine Adviser and the delivery of Victoria’s first statewide strategy to reduce drug harms.

The Labor Government is dedicated to reducing drug harm – investing almost \$3 billion in alcohol and drug treatment, supports and services.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt

“Pharmacotherapy is a proven, lifesaving treatment for people with opioid dependence, which is why we are making it more accessible through community health services right across Victoria.”

“Victorians struggling with addiction deserve the best care, no matter where they live – and our Statewide Action Plan will change and save lives.”

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