

6.5 MOTION TO THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING OF MAV - PHARMACOTHERAPY

Submitting Councillors: Mayor & Cr Josh Fergeus

MOTION

That Council supports the following motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria May 2018 State Council. The motion to be submitted is:

'That the MAV support an advocacy campaign calling for better access and affordability of pharmacotherapy across Victoria, including increasing prescribing physicians and participating pharmacies. The campaign will also seek to decrease stigma towards drug dependence treatment and support improved outcomes for community members seeking therapy to overcome pharmaceutical opioid/mixed drug use dependence.'

BACKGROUND

A recent Notice of Motion, endorsed by Council on 28 November 2017, highlighted the rise in drug overdose deaths in Monash between 2009 and 2016. During this time there were 80 deaths attributed to drug overdoses in Monash, with 20 of these deaths occurring in 2016 alone. Council noted that pharmaceutical drugs were consistently the most prevalent contributors to overdose deaths, often due to a toxic mix of multiple drugs, including drugs and alcohol.

In response to the original NOM Council officers convened a meeting of interested agencies and health service providers to provide further understanding of the complexities of this issue. As a result of this meeting, those local stakeholders have committed to support Council in an advocacy campaign to the State Government to highlight the need for greater access, affordability and the reduction of stigma associated with Pharmacotherapy. It was identified that a key aspect of this advocacy effort will be to pose a Motion to the MAV State Council Meeting May 2018.

DISCUSSION

The City of Monash is committed to progressing local and state-wide advocacy action around this significant and timely public health issue affecting all Victorian communities. This has been identified as a priority to support existing work in developing a Community Consultation plan to engage the whole-of-Monash population, with a particular prioritisation on residents seeking to access pharmacotherapy treatment services.

This, together with continued advocacy, will relate to a public health campaign messaging to raise community awareness about pharmaceutical opioid/mixed use drug dependence and pharmacotherapy treatment. This will seek to address negative perceptions and stigmatisation associated with drug dependence and treatment.

Council recently hosted a meeting with a large number of drug, alcohol and counselling services in the eastern metropolitan region. At this meeting information about these organisation's experiences with Monash-specific drug addiction, overdose rates and knowledge of pharmacotherapy treatment were collected. This greatly informed Council's understanding of the issues, both on a local and state level. As a result, these stakeholders have committed to working with Council to develop a community action plan addressing access to pharmacotherapy.

An application has been submitted to the Alcohol & Drug Foundation for funding support to form a Local Drug Action Team (LDAT). If successful, the Access to Pharmacotherapy in Monash LDAT Working Group will meet on a monthly basis to develop this plan, with the main objective will be to advocate for better access, affordability and de-stigmatisation of pharmacotherapy treatment in Monash. Council has currently identified 10 key organisations operating within the Monash municipality as partners to support the establishment of this LDAT working group.

CONCLUSION

Monash Council has a strong reputation of leading local and state-wide public health campaigns across priority areas, and by supporting this motion to the MAV our strong leadership voice in advocacy will continue. Taking a public health, harm-reduction approach will aid council in responding to the issues of access, affordability and stigma associated with drug dependence and pharmacotherapy treatment in Monash.

ATTACHMENTS

MAV State Council Motion
Officer Response to NOM