



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2014 March 20

OVERVIEW OF WITHDRAWAL MANAGEMENT

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 023-14 re Overview of Withdrawal Management be received for information.

Key Points

- Withdrawal Management Services are designated as provincial services under specific Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) service categories and are administered by Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs).
- In Ontario, there are 39 organizations that offer community and/or residential withdrawal management services; twenty-seven have residential programs, of which four are Level 3 centres that offer medically-assisted withdrawal.
- Locally, withdrawal management services are provided by The Salvation Army Centre of Hope Withdrawal Management Centre (Level 2 Residential service) and Addiction Services of Thames Valley (Community Tele-Withdrawal service).

Background

Withdrawal management assists people in overcoming substance dependence by helping them to obtain at least a temporary state of abstinence. People are supported through the withdrawal process, provided an opportunity to seek help with any concurrent conditions, and referrals for ongoing treatment are facilitated. In follow-up to a request from the Board of Health in September 2013, this report will provide the history of withdrawal management as a provincial service, and an overview of current withdrawal management services in Ontario and Middlesex-London.

History of Withdrawal Management

In the early 1970s, Detoxification Centres were developed under the Ontario Ministry of Health with the goals of providing a community setting for alcohol detoxification and linking with referral and recovery. By 1975, 13 centres had been established in Ontario. Over the following decade, the need became apparent for facilities for women, youth and more diverse populations, as well as the problem of poly-substance abuse.

During the mid-1990s, language changed from “detox” to “withdrawal management,” and there was growing recognition of the need for alternative models. Residential services were developed for less densely populated areas, for those who had barriers to attending residential services and for those with less intensive observation needs.

Withdrawal Management in Ontario

Withdrawal Management Services in Ontario are designated as Provincial Services under the following Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) service categories: Residential Withdrawal Management (Levels 1, 2, and 3) and Community Withdrawal Management (Levels 1, 2, and 3). “Medical detox,” more appropriately referred to as medically-assisted withdrawal, whereby medication is prescribed

and given by the centre to reduce withdrawal symptoms, corresponds to Level 3. Newer categories of services such as Day Withdrawal Management Service (DWMS) and Telephone Supported Withdrawal Management Service (TSWMS) are emerging to provide care when barriers to other categories of withdrawal management exist. [The Ontario Withdrawal Management Standards, 2008](#) set out minimum standards of practice to guide the operation of withdrawal management services.

Residential withdrawal management agencies are sponsored by hospitals under service agreements which are established between the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), MOHLTC, the sponsoring hospital, and the withdrawal management service. According to data from the Drug and Alcohol Helpline (DAH), there are currently 39 organizations that offer community and/or residential withdrawal management services in Ontario; twenty-seven have residential programs, of which four are Level 3 centres. These Level 3 centres are located in Toronto, Ottawa, and Sioux Lookout.

Withdrawal Management in Middlesex-London

The Salvation Army Centre of Hope Withdrawal Management Centre (COH-WMC) opened its doors in 2005. Prior to this, withdrawal management services were provided through St. Joseph's Hospital at an off-site location. COH-WMC is a Level 2, 18-bed residential withdrawal management centre under the sponsorship of Alexandra Hospital in Ingersoll. COH-WMC provides care for both men and women over the age of 16 who are intoxicated/high, in withdrawal or in crisis due to alcohol or drugs. The centre is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Referrals can be made by the client or through a care provider, either by phone or in-person. Of the 18 beds, eight are observation beds for those in active withdrawal. Clients are monitored closely and are referred to medical care when necessary. As a Level 2 Centre, a physician is not on site, however if medication is prescribed by an off-site physician, staff are able to administer it. The other 10 beds are for clients who have completed withdrawal and are expressing a desire to go on to treatment and recovery. Provincial assessments and referrals are administered in the Program.

Stabilization while waiting for intake into treatment centres and attaining long term abstinence is challenging, and re-admissions account for approximately 70% of the 1200-1400 admissions each year. In situations where the Centre's observation beds are at capacity, clients are triaged, provided referrals, assessed for safety and encouraged to call back frequently.

Addiction Services of Thames Valley (ADSTV) TeleWithdrawal and Crisis Support Program is a newer initiative to help fill unmet addiction and mental health service needs in the Thames Valley catchment area of the South West LHIN. It serves the populations of London-Middlesex, Elgin and Oxford Counties. The program provides a client-centred, harm reduction approach to community withdrawal management and crisis support including acute and post withdrawal assessment, consultation, planning, relapse prevention, comprehensive community referrals and education. Services are provided by a team of four registered nurses with support from other health care providers to deliver care using telemedicine technology. Program development started in May of 2012, with the first client entering the program in December 2012. Since that time, there have been approximately 35 clients have entered the program.

Conclusion

Withdrawal Management is part of a continuum of services addressing addictions in our community. It is important for those working in harm reduction and other areas of public health to be aware of and able to refer clients to withdrawal management services. Withdrawal management can serve as a bridge to accessing other health and social services, including longer term addictions treatment.

This report was prepared by Ms. Rhonda Brittan, Social Determinants of Health Public Health Nurse in Oral Health, Communicable Disease and Sexual Health Services.



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