



Kaitaia Emergency Department tackling alcohol-related harm

Alcohol fuelled assault, falls and vehicle crashes place additional strain on an already stretched Kaitaia Emergency Department.

Northland DHB in partnership with Alcohol Drug Helpline and ALAC are working together to reduce alcohol-related harm and to offer people support.

“From the 1st of November Kaitaia Emergency Department staff will be asking patients presenting with an injury, if they have consumed alcohol prior to the injury”, explains Rachel Thompson, Associate Clinical Nurse Manager. “If the answer is yes they will be asked if they would like support from the Alcohol Drug Helpline.”

Clients referred to the Helpline will be offered a range of support options and strategies, around their alcohol use, including harm minimisation and avoiding relapses. Those requiring more intensive treatment will be referred to Northland Mental Health and Addiction services.

“We have an ALAC information pack on hand and a referral form, which we can fax to the Alcohol Drug Helpline there and then, if the patient consents”, Rachel said. “Someone from the Helpline will follow up later by ringing or texting the patient at a time and place convenient to them”.

Public Health Alcohol Harm Reduction Coordinator Mandi Cross says “The Helpline have offered to take the service to the people and we are hoping Northlanders will pick up on this opportunity”

“We are urging people to seek help and advice. Please don’t leave it until you or your loved one are in the Emergency Department. There is support out there and it is about taking that first step and calling 0800 787797.”

The Alcohol Drug Helpline is a free, 0800 service available from 10 am-10 pm, seven days a week. The Helpline offers confidential information, insight and support on any problem, issue or query people have about their own or someone else’s drinking or drug taking.

The Kaitaia ED project replicates similar interagency work with New Zealand Police in Northland.

Northland District Road Policing Manager, Murray Hodgson, says the agencies involved, began working together in May 2011, in the hope that a collaborative approach could both reduce the area’s high number of drink-driving incidents and offer support to those who appeared to have alcohol abuse issues.

“The way it works is anyone arrested for drink-driving in Northland is asked if they would like support from the Helpline, and if they say yes a referral is made,” Inspector Hodgson said.



In the first year 31% of those arrested by the Traffic Alcohol Group had been referred on, and between January and June this year the overall number of Northland referrals had increased by 92% compared with the previous year.

For further information, please contact:

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