

LAUNCH HOUSING SOUTHBANK HEALTH RESPONSE: NURSE LED PRIMARY CARE CLINIC BASED WITHIN HOMELESS CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

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Background:

Individuals experiencing homelessness encounter significant barriers to healthcare access. Within this marginalised group, people who inject drugs (PWID) face additional stigma and judgment, leading to delayed treatment and greater reliance on acute care services. Our clinic addresses these challenges by providing tailored healthcare within a crisis accommodation setting.

Description of program:

At Launch Housing Southbank, our nurse-led clinic offers comprehensive healthcare assessments and flexible service options, including appointments, drop-ins, and outreach, catering to residents of a 51-bed crisis facility. This approach is aimed at meeting the complex needs of PWID, fostering connections with wider healthcare and support services. Additionally, we host health promotion events and respond to internal emergencies, enhancing our comprehensive care approach.

Effectiveness:

The clinic significantly improves healthcare access and engagement among clients, notably PWID, who make up about 50% of service users. Through client and staff accounts, we have observed increased healthcare utilisation, reduced emergency department visits for primary care-treatable conditions, and greater client satisfaction and trust in the healthcare system. These outcomes reflect a crucial transition from healthcare disengagement to active participation in health management, facilitated by our clinic's supportive and judgment-free environment. The clinic contributes to economic efficiency, preventing around 120 ambulance callouts annually, amounting to a savings of approximately \$156,720 for the state economy. We are dedicated to expanding these insights into robust empirical evidence supporting the service's expansion and informing policy improvements.

Conclusion and next steps:

Our clinic's success in providing targeted care to PWID and individuals experiencing homelessness highlights the effectiveness of specialised, nurse-led models intersecting with social services. Plans for expanding our services to additional sites and securing sustainable funding, especially from governmental sources, are underway. This expansion is crucial for broadening our impact, improving public health outcomes, and optimising healthcare resource utilisation.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Funded via Launch Housing Philanthropic Streams, clinical governance through Better Health Network