



## **AIR Detox**

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# Bridging the Gap The AIR Detox Home-Based Alcohol Withdrawal Pilot





### Alcohol - The Harm

- Most destructive addictive drug worldwide.
- Every day, 14 Australians die from alcohol-related causes.
- 1 in 8 presentations to Emergency Departments are alcohol-related. 1 in 4 on the weekend!
- 150,000 hospitalisations annually in Australia.



## Alcohol - The Cost

\$75,000,000,000

1. Examining the Social and Economic Costs of Alcohol Use in Australia: published 2021 by the National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) at Curtin University and Updated social and economic costs of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use in Australia, 2022/23 The George Institute for Global Health November 2023



## Tangible Costs

\$75 Billion cost to Australia each year

### **Tangible costs: \$20.4 Billion**

- III health
- Health services
- Worker absence and occupational injuries
- Crime
- Road traffic accidents
- Alcohol purchases by those dependent on alcohol



# Intangible Costs

\$75 Billion cost to Australia each year

### Intangible costs: \$54.6 Billion

- Years of life lost from premature death
- Lost quality of life
- Impacts on victims of alcoholcaused crime including DV
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum
   Disorder (cost not included, est. \$16 billion)



# How many people are waiting for an alcohol detox today?

- •1,200 to 2,000 people waiting on any given day
- Could be conservative estimate

Sources: Victoria VAADA sector survey snapshot 2024, NSW NADA Snapshot 2024 and AIHW 2023-24 data.





# WHAT CAN WE DO?

### 2023 PHN AODs Needs Assessment

# Findings & Recommendations

**PHN Gold Coast** 

For people with alcohol and other drug challenges, timely access to treatment is especially important to capitalise on motivation to change

Perception that withdrawal can only occur in a bed-based facility

Limited detox capacity on the Gold Coast. Flexible options including in-home detox are required to meet this need

### **AIR Detox Model**

- Higher acuity than community detox models with 24/7 monitoring
- Timely access
- De-stigmatising
- Safe
- Effective
- More cost-effective
- Continuity of care



# How it works: Our Process



# Step 1: Assessment

- Full clinical assessment
- Pathology requests and commencement thiamine and multivitamins
- Further education for patient and support person the week and on emergency procedures
- Coaching over intervening 1-2 weeks

### **Our Process**



### Step 2: Detox

- Daily home or telehealth review
- Breathalyser daily
- Provide and adjust withdrawal medications
- 24/7 contact and medical support
- Begin aftercare planning during the week

### **Our Process**

Step 3: Aftercare

- Personalised aftercare plan
- Timely discharge summary
- Link patient with follow-up services
- 3-12 months of follow-up appointments to review progress
- Anti-craving medication
- Immediate relapse intervention

## How much can we save?



- Inpatient stay for withdrawal averages 5-7 days which is
   1.5 NWAU (National Weight Activity Unit)
- NEP for 2025-26 is \$7,258 per NWAU
- So total cost of in-patient detox is around \$10,000
- Cost of home detox can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 resulting in cost saving of up to \$7,000 per patient treated not including the saving of the bed space
- Saving on the \$75 BILLION PER YEAR

# The Gold Coast PHN Pilot

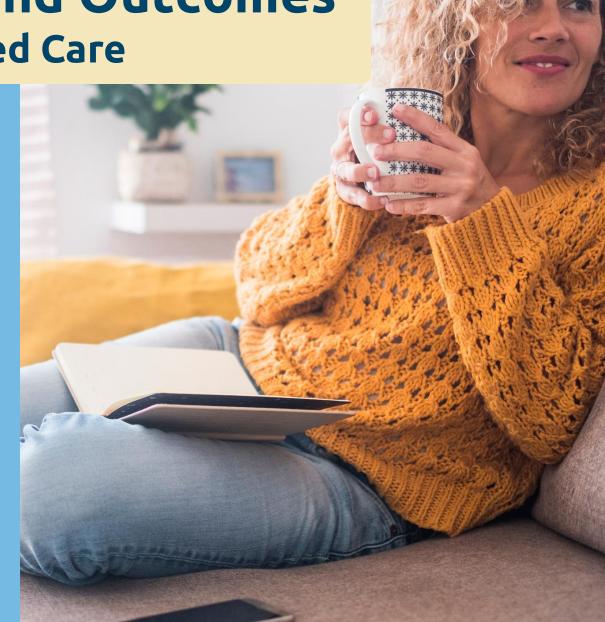
Funded pilot program providing 15 fully-funded detox places through the PHN.

Referrals received via QuIHN, Lives Lived Well, and Kalwun.

Aim: improve access for people who might not otherwise afford private detox and strengthen integration with existing AOD and mental health pathways.

Consumer Experience and Outcomes Client-Centred, Trauma-Informed Care

- Clients report feeling more comfortable and empowered detoxing at home.
- High satisfaction with medical support and aftercare follow-up.
- Detox outcomes: two successful at home detox – 100% completion.
- Common feedback: "I finally felt safe enough to seek help."



# Clinical Safety and Oversight Ensuring Safety in the Home Setting

- Comprehensive pre-detox assessment (AUDIT-C, SADQ, pathology testing, medication review and GP summary).
- Daily review by clinician.
- 24-hour medical support via telephone.
- Written aftercare and relapse plan shared with referring clinicians.

# Key Learnings

- Consumer motivation
- Integration challenges
- Cultural responsiveness
- Clinician engagement



### Alignment with the Joint Regional Plan

### Goal

#### **AIR Detox Contribution**

Access

Removes cost and stigma barriers, shortens wait times

Integration

Links NGOs, GPs and PHN-funded pathways

Experience

Client-centred, trauma-informed, culturally safe care.

Outcomes

 Successful home detox, early engagement, sustained sobriety, reduced ED presentations, cost saving

## **Next Steps**

- Build referral pathway for GPs into the PHN program.
- Build capacity hire and train nurses through AIR Detox model and clinical governance
- Explore co-funding and shared-care models for sustainable expansion across Queensland and Australia



# Thank you

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