

Managing withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs

Summary This information bulletin informs of the publication of new clinical guidance for managing withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs. The document also provides guidance to clinicians in other settings such as private facilities, aged care facilities, the primary health sector and community settings.

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Applies to Ministry of Health, Public Health Units, Local Health Districts, Community Health Centres, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Ministry of Health, Public Health System, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres

Audience NSW Health staff in specialist withdrawal units of hospitals; General Inpatient Units; Emergency Departments and Community Health Settings; Primary Care Settings; General Practice; Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations; Community and Welfare Services

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PURPOSE

This information bulletin advises clinicians about new clinical guidance for managing withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs (AOD). Implementation of the clinical guidance is mandatory in NSW Health facilities. The document also seeks to guide clinicians in other settings including private facilities, aged care facilities, the primary health sector and community settings.

KEY INFORMATION

Clinical guidance for managing withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs

NSW Health has published updated clinical guidance on managing withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs. It is available [here](#).

The document summarises the appropriate management of patients who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, withdrawal from alcohol or other drugs. It provides guidance on screening, assessment, care planning, medications and transfer to post-withdrawal care. It will form the basis for development and implementation of evidenced-based local procedures for screening, assessing and managing patients experiencing or at risk of withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs.

This clinical guidance applies to NSW Health staff in specialist withdrawal units of hospitals, general inpatient units, emergency departments and community health settings. Clinicians in other settings such as non-government facilities and primary care settings such as general practice, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and community and welfare services are also encouraged to use this clinical guidance.

The Chief Executives of NSW Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks are responsible for the implementation of this guidance within their services/facilities to ensure that local protocols, models of care or operating procedures are in place that are aligned and consistent with the guidance.

All clinicians working in NSW Health facilities who are involved in the care of patients who are, or who are at risk of, withdrawing from alcohol or other drugs are to be aware of the clinical guidance and actively participate in its implementation.

Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks are to use this clinical guidance to develop, implement and monitor strategies and tools aligned to the key actions specified in the document, including in electronic clinical information systems.