

A Successful Smoking Cessation Program for People Accessing Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug Non-government Organisations in the ACT: the We CAN Program (Communities Accessing all-types of Nicotine Replacement Therapy)

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Introduction and Aims:

The We CAN Program aims to reduce smoking among people utilizing specialist alcohol and other drug (AOD) non-government organisations in the ACT by providing subsidised access to all-types of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) through community pharmacies.

Method/Approach

Workers provide service users who want to reduce smoking with vouchers redeemable at pharmacies for 8–12 weeks-worth of any types of NRT. The Program:

- provides access to free NRT for a disadvantaged target population with very high smoking rates (82%)
- enables best practice smoking cessation treatment to be implemented as part of routine AOD treatment (full courses; combination therapy; specialist smoking cessation support)
- takes a settings-based approach (non-government specialist AOD services)
- leverages and enhances specialist AOD services' and pharmacies' treatment and support expertise

The Program has been evaluated through the collection of operational data and surveys with program participants.

Key Findings:

- 82% of participants provided with a NRT voucher made a quit attempt, with most accessing sufficient NRT for a quality quit attempt
- 100% of these participants also received smoking cessation support from a specialist AOD worker, complemented by support from the pharmacy
- A large proportion of participants reported they would not have made a quit attempt without subsidised NRT offered through the Program.
- Feedback from AOD workers, pharmacies, and clients has been positive; the Program effectively supports quit attempts.

Discussions and Conclusions:

The We CAN Program has been successful at improving access to best practice smoking cessation treatment and support for people utilizing specialist AOD services.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

Health workers and policy makers may be interested in this collaborative model that successfully facilitates access to costly smoking cessation treatment and smoking cessation advice by disadvantaged smokers. The model can be translated into other community- and government-based health settings.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflicts of interest to disclose.