

Vol. XV No. 1 (2005)

New report lays the groundwork for a national addictions workforce development agenda

A new CCSA report clearly signals the potential for improving the quality of treatment services offered to clients struggling with alcohol and other drug problems by focusing more attention on developing Canada's substance abuse treatment workforce.

The detailed 40-page report, entitled *Optimizing Canada's Addiction Treatment Workforce: Results of a National Survey of Service Providers*, examines current levels and types of education among directors, supervisors and front-line workers in specialized addictions treatment agencies and services. It also identifies gaps in training and professional development, and looks at several other

factors that influence the ability of treatment workers to deliver the highest quality services to clients.

The report concludes with 10 recommended actions for supporting a national agenda aimed at optimizing Canada's substance abuse treatment workforce. The recommendations call for enhanced leader-

ship and supportive strategies, including the formation of a Canadian treatment network, creation of an interactive website to promote best practices, and the development of national workforce standards. Other recommendations call for training and education to be based on best practices, and for continuing research on professional de-



► Dr. Alan Ogborne reviewed the findings of the workforce study at a national meeting of treatment stakeholders in Ottawa in March. The group is working to develop a national, multi-year workforce development agenda.

velopment needs.

Work is already underway on two other recommendations. One calls for continuation and expansion of the National Summer Institute on Addictions, co-hosted by CCSA and the Addiction Research Centre, Correctional Service of Canada. The third annual Institute will take place

July 18-21 in P.E.I. (see full details on CCSA's website at www.ccsa.ca). Another recommendation asks that presentations and workshops on workforce development be on the agenda for CCSA's national "Issues of Substance" conference in November (see page 3 for more details).

The 10 recommendations were reviewed by a group of about 40 treatment and professional development experts from across Canada at a national thematic workshop on March 23-24. The group aims to create a national workforce development agenda. CCSA's report is based on a confidential mail survey of executive directors or agency heads, and staff of specialized sub-

stance abuse treatment agencies and services, conducted between May and November 2004. It points to a number of strengths and weaknesses within Canada's addictions treatment workforce. For example, the workforce is generally well educated, the majority of counsellors have

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Action News is published by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 75 Albert St., Suite 300, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7 www.ccsa.ca

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ISSN 1701-4522

This newsletter has been made possible in part through a financial contribution from Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Health Canada.



► *Substance Abuse in Canada* takes a critical look at a broad range of topics.

New report argues for evidence-based policy decisions

As part of the renewal of Canada's Drug Strategy in 2003, CCSA was tasked with producing an annual "snapshot" of contemporary substance abuse issues with implications for policy development. The first of those reports, *Substance Abuse in Canada: Current Challenges and Choices*, appeared in April.

Six themes were chosen for inclusion in the inaugural report after a broad consultation process. CCSA then identified a team of addiction experts working in Canada to write and review the chapters. The chapter topics are diverse, but they all relate in some way to the need to use research and evidence as a base for sound policy decisions. In some cases, the authors say, research is limited; in others, it exists but isn't used.

A chapter entitled *New directions in alcohol policy* explores the contemporary shift in alcohol policy from prevention measures based on convincing all Canadians to drink less to strategies that target the harm associated with abusive drinking behaviours and situations.

Harm reduction examines the application of harm reduction measures to a broad range of problems associated with substance abuse.

Drugs and driving looks at the emerging policy challenges around drug use behind the wheel and argues that very little of what we know about drinking and driving can be applied to understanding and addressing this far more complex issue.

Availability and use of evidence-based treatment points to the gap between research and practice in the treatment

of substance abuse and considers some of the obstacles that may stand in the way of adopting evidence-based treatment approaches.

Abuse of prescription drugs highlights some of the reasons why prescription drug abuse is such a persistent problem and how pharmaceutical products are diverted to the black market. It also looks at how Canada could do a better job of dealing with the problem.

Alternative sanctions for cannabis possession briefly traces the history of cannabis control in Canada since the 1960s and looks at how a proposed system of fines for simple possession puts Canada back in step with most western democracies.

Copies of the 48-page report are available in print from CCSA or online as a downloadable PDF at www.ccsa.ca. □



► *Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS): A National Survey of Canadians' Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs* is available at www.ccsa.ca as both a 12-page highlights document and a 100-page detailed report.

CAS expected to guide action on substance abuse for years

Detailed results of the Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS)—released by CCSA on March 23—are expected to have a significant influence on program and policy development, and on substance use and abuse research for several years to come.

The 100-page detailed CAS report provides an in-depth national and province-by-province look at how Canadians use alcohol, cannabis and other drugs, and the impact these substances have on their lives. The report also

examines differences in rates of consumption and harm since the 1994 Canada's Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey (CADS) and the 1989 National Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey (NADS). Highlights of the CAS were released in November.

The CAS reveals a rise in alcohol and cannabis use since 1994 with Canadians under the age of 25 accounting for much of the increase and problematic use. The detailed report also outlines self-reported harms that individuals attribute to their use

of alcohol and drugs.

The full CAS data set will be made public in June 2005, allowing Canadian researchers to conduct detailed analyses of the rich data source. Areas targeted for further exploration include health systems, treatment barriers and access; drinking, drugs and driving; psychosocial aspects of alcohol use; attitudes, beliefs and public opinion; detailed analysis of cannabis findings; youth; and older adults.

The CAS was conducted between December 2003 and April 2004. □

CCSA to host national conference on alcohol and other drugs

CCSA is making plans to host “Issues of Substance”, Canada’s only national conference on substance abuse issues, Nov. 13–16, 2005, in Markham, Ont.

**ISSUES of
SUBSTANCE**
Canadian Centre on Substance
Abuse National Conference 2005



**QUESTIONS
de SUBSTANCE**
Conférence nationale du Centre
canadien de lutte contre l'alcoolisme
et les toxicomanies 2005

The landmark conference is supported by Health Canada, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions and the provincial and territorial departments of health. The much-anticipated national event is expected to help energize the Canadian addictions field and build a renewed sense of purpose.

The conference theme of *Innovation and Action* will focus on Canadian contributions to prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement. The meeting will be of most interest to addictions ex-

perts, treatment providers, researchers, prevention specialists, policy analysts, the enforcement community, and private and non-governmental organizations. Representation from groups most affected by alcohol and other drug use is also encouraged.

Participants will be presented with up-to-date, credi-

ble data on the nature and extent of substance abuse in Canada, and with evidence of promising policy and program responses—key elements of the proposed National Framework for Action on Substance Use and Abuse. The conference will feature nationally and internationally recognized keynote and plenary speakers, and more than 24 concurrent sessions on prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement.

The primary language of conference will be English. Simultaneous interpretation will be available for keynote and plenary presentations and some concurrent sessions.

Details on Issues of Substance are available at CCSA’s website, www.ccsa.ca □



Call for Abstracts

Deadline: May 13, 2005

Issues of Substance, Canada’s only national conference on substance abuse and addiction, is seeking abstracts for individual paper presentations and session presentations. Submissions should be relevant to conference theme and concurrent session tracks, which may include, but are not limited to Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment, and Enforcement. The work should be recent, present new knowledge, showcase practice or research innovation, be based on evidence and/or best practices and reflect collaborative approaches. Where possible, submissions should also reflect gender and diversity, and encompass a variety of substances.

For more information: www.ccsa.ca

CCSA sets new goals for collaborative substance abuse network

CCSA’s Health, Education and Enforcement in Partnership (HEP) initiative began in 1994 as a way of breaking down interdisciplinary barriers that can stand in the way of effective solutions to drug and alcohol problems. Drawing on lessons learned since then, CCSA is now moving HEP to the next level with the launch of a new team of HEP coordinators focused specifically on provincial-territorial issues.

The Centre hosted a two-day training session on information sharing and coordination in February for substance abuse workers from across Canada who will form the core of the provincial-territorial HEP

network. Seven provinces have agreed to take part so far: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan. Efforts are also ongoing to recruit coordinators from other jurisdictions.

HEP will launch a new website in June to promote provincial activities and to help coordinators with the development of provincial drug strategies.

For more details or to contact provincial coordinators: kcumberland@ccsa.ca □



► Lead addictions agencies or health departments from seven provinces agreed to send representatives to be trained as HEP coordinators (shown at left with some trainers and CCSA staff at the first session in February). Coordinators will promote better information sharing and coordination of activities within their own province or territory and with other HEP jurisdictions. The ultimate goal is to apply a “multi-sectoral” approach to specific provincial/territorial concerns.

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 university degrees, and staff find their work rewarding. However, there are concerns about the impact of limited resources on opportunities for professional development and advancement, and on recruitment and retention of staff. The study also found that counsellors in some agencies do not have all the qualifications that managers consider to be minimal. As well, there is limited use of certain low-cost professional devel-

opment options such as Web-based learning, self-study on work time, and mentoring.

The report, written by CCSA Associate Dr. Alan Ogborne, and Greg Graves, Coordinator, CCSA Training and Workforce Development, will provide an important baseline against which CCSA and its partners can measure future progress on issues arising from the survey.

The full report is available at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-004022-2005.pdf □

Looking for addictions funding? Try this.

CCSA has created a free-access Funding Sources Database to address the need for a single source of information on funding opportunities in the addictions field. The new database lists approximately 50 funding opportunities, including federal and provincial research grants, com-



munity support opportunities and student fellowships. Each record provides a brief description of the grant as well as information on eligibility, funding range, deadlines, and how to apply. Suggestions for including existing grants in the database are wel-

come. Check out the database at www.ccsa.ca (see CCSA Addictions Databases). □

CCSA states position on Bill C-206

CCSA has told a parliamentary committee studying proposed alcohol warning labels (Bill C-206) that there is no scientific evidence to support the effectiveness of text-based warning labels for addressing hazardous drinking behaviours.

However, in his March 21 presentation, Chief Executive Officer Michel Perron reiterated CCSA's 1996 position that there is "no logical justification" for exempting alcohol from warning label requirements imposed on other potentially harmful products sold

in Canada. But he cited more effective alternatives to health and safety warnings such as standard drink labelling.

He called for the creation of a National Task Force on Alcohol to follow up on recommendations of the National Thematic Workshop on Alcohol Policy, hosted by CCSA in November 2004, and the earmarking of alcohol tax revenues to fund a comprehensive and sustained alcohol and FASD strategy.

This presentation is available at www.ccsa.ca (Mediaroom → Speeches and Presentations). □

Events

For details of these and other events or to submit an event, go to Calendar of Events at www.ccsa.ca

- May 19–21—2nd UK/European Symposium on Addictive Disorders. To match or not to match: enhancing client outcomes. London, England. www.ukesad.org/ (info@ukesad.org).
- June 1–3—Professional Addictions Conference 2005. Insight into action. Edmonton. <http://corp.aadac.com/pac/> (croth-diddams@shaw.ca).
- June 6–8—New Horizons Annual Addictions Conference. Toronto. http://addictionsontario.ca.canadawebhosting.com/PDF/New_Horizons_Reg.pdf. (shelly@highonlife.org).
- June 19–22—4th National conference on tobacco or health. Ottawa. www.4nct.ca/ (conference2005@cctc.ca).
- July 6–8—Inaugural European Association of Addiction Therapy Conference. Budapest. www.eaat.org/2005/eaat_2005.html (info@eaat.org).
- July 18–21—National Summer Institute on Addictions. Mapping change: assessment and treatment planning. Charlottetown, PEI. www.ccsa.ca (mgrant@ccsa.ca).
- Aug. 19–20—First national conference on methamphetamine, hepatitis and HIV. Salt Lake City. www.harmredux.org/conference2005.html (awhipple@harmredux.org).
- Sept. 9—6th International FASD Awareness Day. Worldwide. www.fasworld.com.
- Oct. 23–26—Making gains in mental health and addictions. London, Ont. www.ontario.cmha.ca/content/inside_cmha/making_gains.asp (rachel@haliburtonhighlands.com).
- Nov. 10–12—International Drug Policy Reform Conference. Building a movement for reason, compassion and justice. Long Beach, CA. www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2005/ (psantiago@drugpolicy.org).
- Nov. 13–16—Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse National Conference. Issues of substance. Markham, Ont. www.ccsa.ca (info@ccsa.ca).

MOA signals commitment to sharing

A formal agreement between CCSA and the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation (NNAPF) commits the two organizations to work together to address the challenges of substance abuse in First Nations and Inuit communities.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in March paves the way for sharing of information and research on substance abuse through workshops, training sessions and conferences. The goal is to provide a foundation for effective and culturally-sensitive prevention and intervention programs in First Nations and Inuit communities.

NNAPF is a non-governmental organization funded by Health Canada with a mandate to renew the quality, effectiveness and efficiencies of substance abuse and addictions programming in First Nations and Inuit communities. □



► The MOA was signed March 10 during NNAPF's third annual training gathering in Ottawa. Signatories were NNAPF board member Wayne Christian (left) and CCSA board member Bert Liston.