

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2013 - 2014, 26 February 2014**

**Ref No:** SQ14-000373

**OUTCOME:** 11 - Mental Health

**Topic:** Trauma

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 118, 26 February 2014

**Senator:** Wright Penny

**Question:**

I would appreciate that, thank you, because certainly there is an increasing understanding about the importance of trauma informed care, and I think best-practice principles have now been published. So I would be interested to know the extent to which those form part of any training that GPs would receive. Also, what work is being performed to integrate care for those who have drug and alcohol dependencies?—which is a common reaction, as well as mental health challenges, again due to childhood trauma. To what extent are the dots being connected up between childhood trauma and drug and alcohol dependencies and treatments that are available for people? I am basically asking about the integration of the need to consider drug and alcohol dependencies in the context of childhood trauma, and the extent to which there is any work being done in terms of services or consideration by the department for that.

**Answer:**

The Department of Health is aware of the strong association between the prevalence of childhood trauma and abuse and the prevalence of alcohol and other drug misuse. Best practice in the delivery of specialist drug and alcohol services includes recognition that the integration of trauma-informed concepts in all aspects of service design and delivery is necessary.

As such, specialist alcohol and other drug services who deliver the highest standards of care would include the principles of trauma-informed care by addressing the issues of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment to their clients in the delivery of treatment.

This approach is consistent with the 2013 position paper, Trauma-Informed Care and Practice: A National Strategic Direction, prepared by the Mental Health Coordinating Council.

The mental health publications page on the Health website contains “A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: guide for practitioners and providers” created by Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council. This document outlines the national recovery-oriented mental health practice framework and guidance on recovery-oriented

practice and service delivery. It also addresses the principles to be adopted by practitioners and providers when treating clients with unresolved trauma issues, children and adolescents who may be affected by alcohol and other drugs. The document can be accessed from the Department of Health website at:

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/67D17065514CF8E8CA257C1D00017A90/\\$File/recovgde.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/67D17065514CF8E8CA257C1D00017A90/$File/recovgde.pdf)