Drug Treatment Funding Program
Ontario Systems Projects

Health Canada's Drug Treatment Funding Program (DTFP)

Addiction Supportive Housing (ASH) Evaluation

Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs

An Ontario DTFP Systems Level Project

About the Project: Ontario's 45 ASH programs were developed to provide housing and support for people with substance use issues who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The ASH review is designing an evaluation framework and assessing the preliminary outcomes of those programs.

KEY MESSAGES:

- *There is no single "ASH" model.* We found significant variation across the province in the design and structure of ASH programs with respect to seven major variables.
- *Clients appreciate ASH.* Input obtained through nine focus groups suggests that clients are very satisfied with their own ASH program, regardless of the model.
- *Housing is an enabler.* Clients also told us about the important role that secure housing has played in allowing them to address other issues – substance use included.
- *ASH appears to be meeting some critical objectives.* Early results suggest a decline in emergency department visits and an increase in connections with primary care providers among ASH clients.
- *This is only the beginning*. We need to continue the momentum generated through the project to develop and implement standards of practice and conduct further evaluation to better comprehend the benefits to the clients, the system, and Ontario as a whole.
- *Lessons Learned/Limitations*:
  - ASH providers face similar issues and could benefit from regular opportunities to connect (i.e. community of practice; opportunities to network).
  - Variations in program design allow for a more locally- focused approach but jeopardize the development of a coherent provincial system .
  - Limitations on data collection constrain our ability to draw firm conclusions about program outcomes.
- *Next Steps:*
  - Six reports to be completed and disseminated: Literature Review; Provincial Snapshot; Early Outcomes; Promising Practices; Cost/Benefit
  - Information-sharing opportunities to be provided (e.g. 'OPEN'- Ontario Policy Exchange Network; showcase for promising practices)
  - Evaluation framework to be revised based on lessons learned.

For further information about the project, please visit www.ontariodtfp.ca or contact projects@ofcmhap.on.ca