

NEXT STEP DRUG ADDICTION PROGRAM, NUMBER OF CLIENTS

770. Mr J.L. Bradshaw to the Minister for Health

- (1) How many clients have been treated each year in Next Step's own drug addiction programme over the last three years?
- (2) How many in the calendar year 2002?
- (3) How many of these were treated with Methadone and how many were treated with Buprenorphine?
- (4) How many clients have been treated with Methadone and how many with Buprenorphine under the Community Programme for Opioid Pharmacotherapy in those same periods?
- (5) What is the annual budget for Next Step?
- (6) What was the budget for the 2002 calendar year?
- (7) Does Next Step evaluate the success of its programmes?
- (8) If so, what has been the success rate with narcotic addiction in the last three years that have been evaluated?
- (9) Why is there such resistance by the Health Department to allowing the Chemical Health Centre in Victoria Park to administer treatment in the way that the Centre believes to be in the best interests of treating the addicts?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

1. Clients treated at Next Step
2000: 4754
2001: 3920
2002: 3581
2. 3581
3. Methadone at Next Step:
2000: 675
2001: 640
2002: 639
Buprenorphine at Next Step (note it was not available in 2000)
2000: N/A
2001: 37
2002: 105
4. Methadone
2000: 2904
2001: 2602
2002: 2231
Buprenorphine (note it was not available in 2000)
2000: N/A
2001: 289
2002: 1253
5. \$6.86 million (2002/03)
6. \$6.3 million (2001/02)
7. Yes. Two evaluations have been carried out on the community based methadone program in the last three years.

Next Step services are currently under review and are being restructured to extend specialist services in strategic locations in the metro area.

As part of Next Step's performance indicators, client satisfaction surveys are conducted annually, as are effectiveness indicators on the clients' improvement in health, psychological, social relationships, primary and other drug use.
8. There is ample evidence that opioid dependent people do well while they are in treatment. Retention in treatment is a specific indication of stabilisation for these clients. The average retention of clients on Next Step's methadone program is 264.5 weeks or approximately 5 years.

9. The community program for opioid pharmacotherapies is supported by national guidelines for prescribers, which provide the policy and clinical management directions to achieve optimal clinical outcomes and reduce the risk of diversion. The risk of diversion by the prescription of take-away medications is covered by an independent set of guidelines.

Clinical support is provided by a 24 hour Clinical Advisory Service to give advice and guidance to prescribers.

The Department of Health, WA requires that all prescribers comply with the national guidelines and with the guidelines for take-aways. The Chemical Health Centre has recurrently breached these, and consequently has been served a notice requiring that compliance with the guidelines must be demonstrated before new authorisations for patients are issued.