

Media Release

Thursday, June 2, 2011

New drug and alcohol nurse to help youth

St John of God Health Care has welcomed a new youth nurse to their Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network (DAWN) team to help young people aged 12 to 25 who want to make positive changes to their alcohol or drug use.

DAWN Youth nurse, Claire Wilkinson, will work with young people who live in the vicinity of Fremantle, Cockburn and Melville, providing free services that aim to help young people cease or reduce their substance use and raise awareness about health risks.

The unique service allows young people to meet the DAWN Youth nurse in a place where they feel safe and comfortable to talk about substance use, whether it is at home, in a park, at Fremantle headspace or another mutually agreeable location.

Recognising the importance of working with young people in the community and, wherever possible, alongside their family, DAWN focuses on empowering young people to recognise their strengths and work towards achieving their goals.

With ten years general nursing experience and an additional five years specialising in addictions, Claire has also worked specifically with youth for more than two years. She is particularly passionate about dual diagnosis (of co-occurring substance and mental health issues) and early intervention – addressing health issues early in their lifecycle with the aim of preventing them from becoming long-term problems.

“I am really excited about joining DAWN, as it is a unique service, which has had a lot of success in helping people who want to make changes with their use of alcohol or drugs,” Claire said.

“DAWN has an excellent reputation for the services they provide to young people and one important aspect about this role is that it allows flexibility for young people so they can get help in a setting where they feel comfortable, which is not always easy. It is also great to be with St John of God Health Care again because it is where I started my nursing career and the organisation has a great team ethic and is true to the values of its Mission.”

Liz Wilson-Taylor, manager of DAWN, said: “Claire is a welcome addition to our team, she is really enthusiastic and has a lot of experience in specialist drug and alcohol services so I am sure she will be a real success working with young people in Fremantle, Cockburn and Melville.”

“One of the most important things we say about our services are that we have a ‘no wrong door policy’ – that means that if we can’t help someone directly we will make sure they are referred onto a service that is better equipped to help them. We never turn anyone away, we strive to form strong links with other agencies in the community to provide more options and greater accessibility for young people to services that suit their needs,” Liz added.

DAWN is operated as one of St John of God Health Care’s Social Outreach and Advocacy services and employs an holistic approach to supporting people using alcohol and other drugs. DAWN also has an extensive adult service helping people undertake home-based withdrawals across the Perth metropolitan area. For more information or to make a referral please phone 08 9382 6049 or email dawn@sjog.org.au

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NOTES

About St John of God Health Care

St John of God Health Care is a leading provider of private hospitals, pathology, and Social Outreach and Advocacy services, throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region.

We return all profits to the communities we serve by:

- Updating and expanding technology and facilities
- Expanding existing services and acquiring new services
- Providing Social Outreach and Advocacy services to people experiencing disadvantage

Social Outreach and Advocacy services provide significant care and relief for people experiencing disadvantage throughout Australia, New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region, particularly in areas where we have identified gaps in current service provisions. More information is available at www.sjog.org.au/outreach

DAWN – The Drug and Alcohol Withdrawal Network supports people across Perth who want to reduce or cease their substance use in a home environment. Operated by mental health nurses who link with other drug and alcohol agencies across metropolitan Perth, DAWN works in the community and identifies services that are appropriate to their needs. Many people find that they are more comfortable accessing DAWN's home-based support as it removes the possible stigma attached to entering an inpatient facility. The service is free of charge and more information is available at www.sjog.org.au/dawn