

MEMO

To: Board Members
From: Cathy O'Malley, GM Strategy Primary & Community
Date: 22 May 2019
Subject: **DECISION: Revised 2019 NMH Alcohol Position Statement**

Status

This report contains:

- For decision
- Update
- Regular report
- For information

Summary

The NMH Alcohol Position Statement (attached as item 5.1) has been updated to include current legislation, present updated figures, present current best practice guidelines and evidence supporting alcohol harm reduction interventions. The intent and the interventions contained in the 2012 Position Statement have not been altered. This revision has been endorsed by ELT and been reviewed by Dr Nicki Jackson, Director of Alcohol Health Watch.

Background details

In 2012, all five South Island DHBs agreed to a single position statement to address alcohol-related harm. This, along with an evidence-based background paper, was developed by the South Island Public Health Partnership.

The position statement:

- Acknowledges the wide range of alcohol-related harm that is experienced by people in the South Island
- Acknowledges that the burden of this harm is carried disproportionately by some population groups
- Recognises that alcohol use is a major risk factor for numerous health conditions, injuries and social problems
- Recognises alcohol-related harm costs the health sector significant money, time and resources.

Purpose of the Position Statement

That the updated alcohol position statement is available to provide an evidence base for the development of future projects and initiatives that have the aim of reducing alcohol related harms regionally. This could be used to inform:

- NMH led initiatives / projects such as an Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy
- Local Alcohol Policies – initiation and reviews
- City and District Councils – bylaws and district plan roles
- Local agency led work by Nelson Tasman Alcohol Accord, Marlborough Alcohol Governance Group, Te Piki Oranga, PHOs and other related groups.

Updating the Position Statement

The intent and the interventions contained in the 2012 Position Statement are still relevant in 2019 however the legislation governing alcohol has changed significantly. NMH staff decided that it was necessary to update the Position Statement in order to:

- Reflect current legislation
- Present updated figures

- Present current best practice guidelines and evidence supporting alcohol harm reduction interventions
- Identify the need to work with key agencies on alcohol harm reduction
- Recognise that alcohol harm reduction work is identified within our planning framework.

Changes to the Position Statement

- An additional opening paragraph has been added to reflect the role of NMH and our mission.
- Second paragraph identifies that alcohol is a significant problem
- Third paragraph gives a summary of the implementation strategies that NMH has been undertaking to reduce alcohol harm. The wording of the strategies are kept broad so that position statement less likely to date, and that there is flexibility within the document so it can be applied in many different contexts. The following bullet points have been added to provide clarity around the actions that NMH is taking to reduce harm:
 - A bullet point regarding the need to support and encourage research and evaluation to be done of interventions to ensure that they are effective and equitable
 - A bullet point that emphasises the importance of cross sector collaboration work.
 - A bullet point that acknowledges that work plans relating to alcohol harm reduction work are captured in the NMH Annual Plan

Changes – Summary of Evidence

Alcohol harm paragraph: The figures in the alcohol harm paragraph have been updated. There were two paragraphs on alcohol harm and a section on the biological effects and these have been merged for easier readability.

Alcohol harm and population group paragraph: An additional sentence has been added stating that factors relating to Maori alcohol consumption are symptomatic of broader social issues related in inequity.

Alcohol harm related costs paragraph: This has been updated with NMH figures.

Alcohol is widely available in NZ: This section contains updated data.

NZ Drinking Patterns: The first paragraph on accessibility has been simplified slightly and figures have been updated. Drinking pattern data has been updated from the 2013 and 2018 NZ Health survey, and 2018 data from Health Promotion Agency on alcohol consumption.

Current Law: The Sale and Supply of Alcohol 2012 has been introduced since the last position statement. The new Act has introduced the ability for Councils to enact Local Alcohol Policies and information pertaining to these has been added. Further information about the Resource Management Act and the Ministry of Health National Drug Policy has been added.

Changes: Evidence Based Strategies to Reduce Harm

An introduction to the successfulness of intervention strategies has been included for readability.

Raise prices: The background information regarding excise taxes has been updated to reflect current practice. Information on how excise taxes can be used to cover the cost of externalities associated with consumption has been included. Minimum unit prices information has been added as an additional strategy as this is now used in Scotland and has growing international recognition.

Raise the purchase age: Minor wording changes made. An additional sentence has been added regarding adequate enforcement.

Reduce marketing and advertising: The old text gave historical detail about alcohol advertising, updated text looks at the connection between alcohol and marketing, including the influence of sports advertising.

Increase drink driving countermeasures: The old text recommended reducing driving alcohol limits which has been introduced. The new text discusses the on-going problem of drink driving and the introduction of the alcohol lock system.

A concluding sentence for the Position Statement has also been added.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE BOARD ADOPTS THE REVISED POSITION STATEMENT