

New app trial launched for alcohol or drug recovery

Waikato District Health Board's Mental Health Service launched today (27 Nov) the trial of New Zealand's first smartphone application that provides extra support to people recovering from alcohol or other drug issues named Recovery in Hand, powered by ACHES.

A number of people including partners, consumers and staff came together at Waikato Hospital and online to celebrate the launch.

Recovery in Hand is proven to help people cope in times when alcohol or drug relapse may occur, without the need to wait for their next counselling appointment.

The one-year pilot will complement 200 people already receiving care from the DHB via a mobile interface that connects them to their clinical team, recovery community, peers and other resources 24/7.

Waikato DHB's Interim Chief Executive Derek Wright and Professor Anil Thapliyal CEO of specialised e-mental health and addictions consulting company Health Trx were both excited for a number of reasons, with Waikato being the first in Australasia to look at how we can support people in recovery using technology in this way.

Derek recognised a number of consumers involved in the trial saying "If it doesn't work for the consumers, then it doesn't work. Recovery in Hand is about doing things differently and enabling client care when they need it, not when we're available, because addictions are a 24 hour a day issue."

One speaker, who has been clean for a decade from alcohol, drugs and gambling thanks to care from the DHB, was very supportive of the app saying anything that helps addicts to work on recovery and stay clean is very important.

Waikato DHB's interim director of mental health and addiction services, Vicki Aitken says "people are impacted by addiction if they don't feel connected.

"Whanau and other close support are vital parts of recovery, along with active counselling and treatment. Recovery in Hand is an extra tool to help people feel connected and take further ownership of their recovery plan" she said.

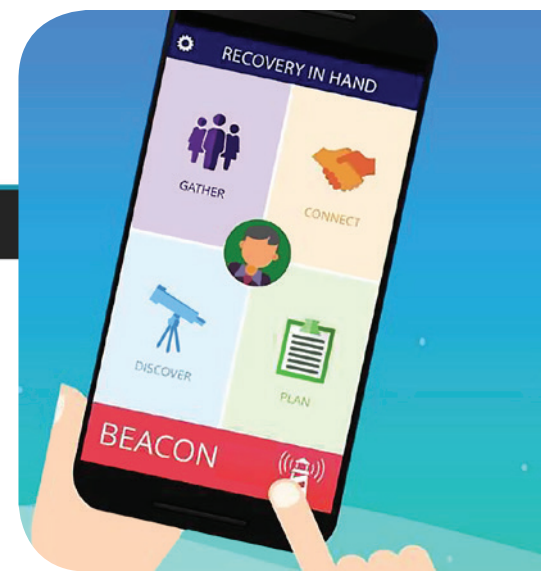
"Addiction services and our NGO partners have always done their best to meet demand for their services, but could always do with more resources. This new tool will help complement and support the counselling services we provide.



Waikato DHB's matua Hemi Curtis welcoming and blessing the launch audience

"Waikato consumers and our team of clinicians and counsellors are really excited and supportive of the trial and look forward to seeing Recovery in Hand's success in the Waikato."

Recovery in Hand powered by ACHES has a range of features for patients that are accessed via a smartphone interface. Clinicians and counsellors have access via a web-based dashboard.



Key features include:

- A hot button (Beacon) for access to emergency support
- GPS detection for when a patient has entered a potential high risk location (optional feature patients can choose to enable)
- A variety of supportive resources including video, and audio
- Goal setting, journaling and the ability to upload pictures, texts and video that will motivate people to stay clean
- Medication and appointment reminders
- Recovery tracking and progress.

You can watch a video of the launch on our Facebook page.

More about Recovery in Hand, powered by ACHES

The University of Wisconsin-designed an app called ACHES (Addiction Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System), which is now part of the product range by CHES Mobile Health (www.chesmobilehealth.com).

The partnership between CHES Mobile Health and Waikato DHB has allowed New Zealand to customise and name a local version: Recovery in Hand powered by ACHES. DHB mental health staff chose the new name.

ACHES has been successful in halving the rate of relapse among alcoholics in the US. Early testing showed that alcoholics using the tool had a 50 per cent reduction in heavy drinking days; ACHES found it also resulted in an extension of abstinence rates.