



# Inside a MANAGED ALCOHOL PROGRAM in Thunder Bay, Ontario

## WHAT ARE MANAGED ALCOHOL PROGRAMS (MAPs)?

Managed alcohol programs (MAPs) aim to reduce harms from alcohol for people with unstable housing and severe alcohol-related problems. They achieve this by providing regular doses of beverage alcohol in a safe setting, limiting intoxication levels and consumption of non-beverage alcohol.

MAPs operate in at least 10 sites across Canada but little research on effectiveness has been published.



Shelter House is a **15-BED MAP** which follows a **HOUSING FIRST MODEL** by providing participants with **access to housing and individualized supports**.



**18 MAP PARTICIPANTS & 20 CONTROLS** participated in the pilot and **11 participants and program staff** completed qualitative interviews.

**All participants identified as being Indigenous.**



6 ounces of wine are served **EVERY 90 MINUTES** between 8am and 11pm.



Residents have access to onsite **health care, counselling, lifeskills training, cultural activities and help managing money.**

## CHANGES IN ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS:

The CARBC-led evaluation found that participants had

**43%**  
fewer police  
contacts



**33%**  
less time in  
custody

**70%**  
fewer detox  
admissions



**47%**  
fewer hospital  
admissions

compared to a control group who were not on a MAP<sup>1</sup>.



MAP participants also reported **LESS FREQUENT USE OF NON-BEVERAGE ALCOHOL** such as mouthwash or rubbing alcohol,



**FEWER ALCOHOL-RELATED HARMS &**



**IMPROVED SCORES ON LIVER FUNCTION TESTS<sup>1</sup>.**

## IMPROVEMENTS IN QUALITY OF LIFE:



MAP participants were more likely to **keep their housing and experience increased safety and improved quality of life** compared to life on the streets, in jails, shelters or hospitals.

*"This program ... has given me hope and has allowed me to really think what I wanna do with the rest of my life"*



Participants described the MAP environment as a **safe place characterized by respect, trust and a non-judgmental approach providing a sense of family, home and hope with opportunities to reconnect with family and culture<sup>2</sup>.**

## COST EFFECTIVENESS:



Preliminary findings indicate that provision of adequate housing and individualized support to manage and regulate alcohol consumption can be a **cost-effective way to address homelessness for those with severe alcohol dependence**. When taking the social costs of homelessness into account, there is an estimated **saving of \$1.09 to \$1.21 for every dollar invested** due to significant reductions in frequency of health, social and legal service utilization by participants, both prior to entry and compared to a control group<sup>3</sup>.

## DO MAPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

While it seems likely that MAPs can reduce acute harms from drinking, it remains to be confirmed if this also translates into improved longer-term health outcomes given the hazards of daily consumption of large quantities of beverage alcohol. These promising findings are being investigated in a larger national study. We also need to identify policies for running MAPs which are most effective at minimizing both acute and chronic harms from alcohol.

<sup>1</sup>Vallance, K., Stockwell, T., Pauly, B. Chow, C., Gray, E., Kryswaty, B., Perkin, K. and Zhao, J. (2016). Do managed alcohol programs change patterns of alcohol consumption and reduce related harm? A pilot study. Harm Reduction Journal. <http://bit.ly/21qFyqA>  
<sup>2</sup>Pauly, B., Gray, E., Perkin, K., Chow, C., Vallance, K., Kryswaty, B. and Stockwell, T. (2016). Finding safety: a pilot study of managed alcohol program participants' perceptions of housing and quality of life. Harm Reduction Journal. <http://bit.ly/1QNX8wE>  
<sup>3</sup>Hammond, K., Gagne, L., Pauly, B., Stockwell, T. (2016). A cost-benefit analysis of a Canadian Managed Alcohol Program. A report prepared by the Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia for the Kwae Kii Win Centre Managed Alcohol Program. <http://bit.ly/1WbZY7u>