



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

20 March 2007

Drug expert to give evidence on naltrexone therapy for addicts

Professor Gary Hulse, Professor of Addiction Medicine at the University of Western Australia, will give evidence tomorrow at a public hearing of the House Families Committee.

The committee is currently conducting an inquiry into the impact of illicit drugs on families.

Professor Hulse has worked in the drug and alcohol field for 23 years in both clinical and academic environments. He was recently awarded three consultancies commissioned by the federal Department of Health and Ageing to investigate the effectiveness of naltrexone implants.

Methadone and buprenorphine are the standard pharmacotherapies for heroin dependence in Australia.

Unlike these therapies, however, which are opioid substitutes, naltrexone is an opioid antagonist. Naltrexone breaks the cycle of addiction by blocking opioid receptors in the brain.

Chairman Bronwyn Bishop welcomed the opportunity to be briefed on the latest research on addiction therapy.

'The committee is interested to learn more about a therapy that may reduce the number of people addicted to opiates in Australia, and fosters a complete break with the addiction lifestyle', she said.

'We are also keen to learn about how treatment options affect the families of patients, and how families can meaningfully participate in treatment programs'.

'Addiction is incredibly destructive for the families and partners of addicts - emotionally, socially and financially.'

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Date and time: Wednesday 21 March 2007, 10.15am – 11.30 am.
Venue: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

For media interview: Please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Committee Chairman the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For further information on making a submission: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email fhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/illicitdrugs/index.htm>