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May 07, 2013 08:12 from Sarah Anderson

Bridges Project helps first 12 patients
By Sarah Anderson (@SarahCFRA)

Ottawa's new Bridges Project is fully operational just five months after the funding was announced and already 12 patients are being helped by the program which fills the gaps between services already offered.

The Royal, the Youth Services Bureau and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario have long offered programs for teens and youth in a mental health crisis but their programs weren't linked together.

"Up until a few weeks ago what we would do is we would discharge those patients with a bit of a safety plan, with some referrals, and point them in the right direction to try to get the help they need," said Alex Munter, the CEO of the CHEO.

He said even with referrals to the Royal or the YSB but often the daunting task of navigating the system was often too too much for families in crisis.

"Bridges is aptly named because it is intended to bridge services and support for youth and their families while helping reduce suicide and reestablishing healthy lifestyles and routines for the youth in Ottawa and their families," said the Youth Services Bureau Executive Director, Joanne Lowe.

This is the first time such a service has been available in the city and she said the services is available to all families in crisis.

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