

New program aims to bridge gap in youth mental health care

BY CHRIS HOFLEY , OTTAWA SUN

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Allan Hubley is all too aware of a gap in treatment options for young people struggling with their mental health.

As the Kanata-South councillor and his family tried to help his son, Jamie, through his own crisis, Hubley said it was hard to know where to turn outside of a hospital setting.

Jamie lost his battle with depression and took his own life a little over a year ago.

On Monday his father helped launch a new service targeting youth mental health, which he hopes will keep other families from experiencing a similar tragic loss.

The Bridge Project is a collaborative effort between the Youth Services Bureau (YSB), CHEO, Ottawa Public Health and the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group to provide critical mental health services for the youth who need it most.

The hope is that once released from hospital, young people and their parents won't be left out in the cold on a lengthy waiting list to see specialists and receive the help that is needed immediately.

"This was a gap in the system," said Hubley from the YSB head office. "We didn't know where to go when we came out of the hospital."

Not having to wait for the right help is critical.

"One day can make a difference," Hubley said.

The new program funded through a \$500,000 investment from the Champlain Local Health Integration Network will allow youth to access services like psychiatrists, social workers and nurses in one place.


It is expected the new resources will ease the burden on emergency rooms and reduce repeat visits.

“Treatment will be easy to access and will seamlessly fill the gap that currently exists between hospitalization and crisis support,” said YSB executive direction Joanne Lowe.

chris.hofley@sunmedia.ca

Twitter: @chrishofley

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