

For immediate release

CHEO, The Royal and YSB join forces to improve mental health services for youth in crisis

Ottawa, January 6, 2011—The Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group (The Royal) and the Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB) are teaming up to provide quicker, more seamless help to youth in crisis and their families.

An agreement signed by the three organizations will better connect CHEO’s emergency department and urgent care service, The Royal’s youth mental health services and YSB’s 24-hour mental health crisis program. This new framework will allow psychiatrists, nurses, youth workers and other professional staff from the three organizations to work more closely together to better help youth and their families to receive the level of treatment required. Protocols have also been developed to enhance communication among YSB, The Royal and CHEO, including confidential alerts when there is concern about a youth’s situation or the potential for crisis is high.

“One of the most frequent complaints we hear from parents is the difficulty they face trying to find the right service, especially at a time of crisis in their family,” said Alex Munter, executive director of YSB. “This protocol will lessen the load on parents, make it easier for them to find the right service at the right time, and reduce the number of times they have to tell and retell the same story to different workers.”

“Mental health issues impact more families in our community than you would think. And five out of six kids never get the help they need,” said Michel Bilodeau, president and chief executive officer, CHEO. “We must all do what we can to use the resources we have as efficiently as possible. While much more is still needed to meet the demand for mental health services in our community, this is a good step and will hopefully make a difference in someone’s life.”

“Major mental health issues are prevalent in the age range of 15 to 25 and we need to do all we can to help young people at a crucial time in their development. Making the system work for youth and their families is a key priority for all of us,” stated George Weber, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Royal.

YSB’s services include a 24-hour crisis phone line (613-260-2360), a mobile team that visits families, and a short-stay residence where youth in crisis can stay for up to five days. CHEO, in addition to its 24-hour emergency department for psychiatric emergencies, also operates urgent care and acute in-patient services for children and youth. The Royal offers intensive and specialized mental health services to youth (16-18) with early onset major psychiatric illnesses that are resistant to treatment.

The Royal and CHEO currently work together under the Children and Youth - Specialized Psychiatric and Mental Health Services program to deliver specialized psychiatric and mental health services for children and youth under shared regional leadership and using a centralized intake process to offer the best possible care to young people in our region.

Background

The Royal is where world-class breakthroughs in research and patient care happen. The Royal is a regional specialized mental health resource serving communities in Ontario and northern Canada. In

addition to providing the best care, the Royal is also recognized as a teaching hospital and a centre focused on mental health research.

CHEO is a pediatric health and research center providing outstanding family-centered patient care, pioneering breakthrough research, and training the health care professionals of tomorrow.

The Youth Services Bureau, which has served Ottawa youth and families since 1960, is an accredited children's mental health agency. In addition to its clinical mental health programs, which include a crisis service and a range of counseling and school programs, it also offers mental health components in its other service areas including shelters, youth justice programs and a street health clinic.

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