

November 21, 2016

RVH receives funding for regional Child & Youth Mental Health program

Thousands of troubled youth throughout North Simcoe Muskoka will soon have access to specialized mental health care at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH).

Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Dr. Eric Hoskins announced today at RVH that the provincial government will invest \$3.2 million in annual operating funds for a regional Child and Youth Mental Health program.

"Young people facing mental health challenges should be able to get the quality supports and care they need. By investing in this new care program in Barrie, children and youth in the region will have better access to the services and treatment to help them stay healthy," says Minister Hoskins.

North Simcoe Muskoka is currently the only region in Ontario that does not have a hospital-based child and youth mental health program. The funding will enable RVH to construct an eight-bed inpatient unit, to open in late-2017, which will care for up to 300 young people a year. A comprehensive day hospital program will provide an additional 3,000 outpatient visits annually.

"Youth suffering acute mental health issues, such as suicidal behaviour, psychosis and severe depression need quick access to secure, specialized inpatient services for stabilization and treatment," says Janice Skot, RVH president and CEO. "Today's announcement will change the future for kids in crisis across North Simcoe Muskoka. By providing care closer to home, RVH and our regional partners will significantly ease the burden for young people and their families."

RVH's Chief of Psychiatry, Dr. Eric Mulder, notes that 1,700 young people visited a North Simcoe Muskoka Emergency Department last year, a number that has doubled over the past five years. The lack of hospital services has meant many of those troubled children and youth were sent outside the region – as far away as Ottawa – for their inpatient mental health care.

"The statistics are startling," says Dr. Mulder. "One in five youth experiences a mental health challenge and that number continues to increase. We know that 70 per cent of mental illness arises in childhood or adolescence so getting these kids the help they need in the early stages is key."

While the funds announced today are for annual operating expenses, the RVH Foundation has committed \$5 million through its Hearts and Minds fundraising campaign for the construction, equipment and furnishing of the unit.

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Photo and outline: Ontario's Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Dr. Eric Hoskins visited Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) to announce the provincial government will invest \$3.2 million in annual funding for a regional Child and Youth Mental Health program, helping thousands of troubled youth throughout North Simcoe Muskoka. Celebrating the announcement at RVH were (from left) Carol Lambie, president and CEO of Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care; Dr. Eric Mulder, chief of psychiatry, RVH; David McCullough, chair, RVH Foundation Board of Directors; Janice Skot, president and CEO, RVH; Dr. Eric Hoskins, minister of Health and Long-Term Care; Nathan Arends-Fraser, youth advocate for child and youth mental health and singer/songwriter; Kirsten Parker, chair, RVH Board of Directors; Ann Hoggarth, member of provincial parliament, Barrie; and Jenna Wiseman, parent and advocate for child and youth mental health.

For more Information:

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About RVH:

RVH is a regional health centre in Barrie, Ontario, located 80 kilometres north of Toronto. As the largest hospital in the region of Simcoe Muskoka, RVH's team of over 350 physicians, 2,500 employees and 850 volunteers provides exceptional care and specialty services to almost half a million residents, including cancer care, stroke services, orthopaedics, intensive care, mental health and interventional radiology. RVH is focused on delivering high-quality, safe care that puts patients and their families first. For more information visit www.rvh.on.ca