

September 5, 2018

School is in session at RVH

Today Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) celebrated the opening of the Day Program, a service of the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Child and Youth Mental Health Program.

The focus of this program, a partnership with the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB), is to provide academic and mental health services for high school students unable to attend regular classes due to a diagnosis of anxiety or depression. The goal is to transition the students back to their community high school.

On Friday, September 7, the first four students will arrive and school will then officially be in session, with another six expected by the end of the month. These students – in Grades 9 to 12 - will have the reading, writing and arithmetic found in a traditional school, with the added bonus of recreational therapies and mental health counselling. One of the unique features of this service is that students attend during the day and return to the comfort of their own homes in the evening.

“We know that a teenager’s mental health is just as important as their physical health and they deserve the same quality of care and access to support,” says Janice Skot, RVH president and CEO. “One year ago, hospital-based mental health services for troubled kids weren’t available anywhere in this region. Since our regional program opened ten months ago, almost 300 young people have been cared for in the eight-bed inpatient unit. We always knew the job wasn’t finished. We needed a service for students who are struggling academically because of their illness. Today we have finished the job and opened up a new avenue of hope for high school students with anxiety or depression. Our goal is to fill their backpacks with effective strategies to get them back to their community high school.”

Much work went into establishing this program which required partnerships with the Simcoe County District School Board, Eastview Secondary School, Innisdale Secondary School, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, Kinark Child and Family Services and New Path Youth and Family Services - Lead Agency for the provincial government’s Moving on Mental Health for Simcoe County.

“The SCDSB is really excited to partner with RVH for this new program, supporting adolescents aged 14 to 18 who are struggling with mental health issues,” says Peter Beacock, Simcoe County District School Board Chairperson. “Combining education and treatment in a hospital setting, it will provide students the supports and skills needed to return to school and be successful. Using a day-treatment model, the program will be unique and include trained recreational and behavioural therapists, as well as teachers, that will allow students to continue to attend school while receiving treatment.”

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Photo attached/Cutline: Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) recently celebrated the opening of the Day Program, a service of the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Child and Youth Mental Health Program. Helping to start the new school year at RVH are Melody Boyd, operations director, Regional Cancer and Mental Health & Addictions Programs; Peter Beacock, Simcoe County District School Board chairperson; Janice Skot, RVH president and CEO; Heather Cochrane, manager of Adult Crisis Services and the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Child and Youth Mental Health Program; Michael O’Keefe, chair, RVH Board of Directors; and Dr. Eric Mulder, RVH’s chief of Psychiatry.

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