

MEDIA RELEASE

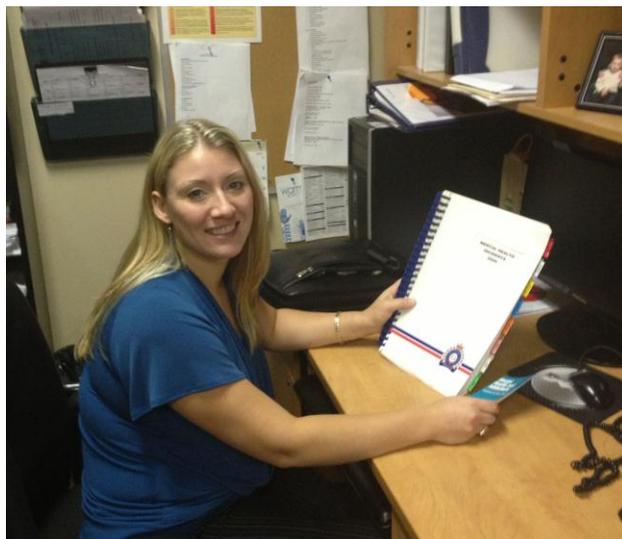
Milestone Reached in Community-Based Crisis Care

A full-scale partnership approach to people-centred care shows early success

December 18, 2012 – A new approach to providing community-based mental health crisis care, involving several organizations, is leading to a dramatic increase in the number of people in Greater Sudbury accessing mental health care services.

On October 1, 2012, a new Community Crisis Model opened its doors at 127 Cedar Street, the site of HSN's Sudbury Mental Health and Addictions Centre. Crisis Intervention Services provides urgent mental health care for those feeling overwhelmed and offers a calm and more private environment away from the hospital's busy emergency department.

Since the launch of the new model by the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN), twice the number of people have accessed crisis help compared to the same period last year. This unique Community Crisis Model brings together several community partners including the NE LHIN, Health Sciences North (HSN), the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Sudbury/Manitoulin, and the Greater Sudbury Police Service (GSPS).



Sarah Gauthier, with the CMHA, holds up the training manual created to help Greater Sudbury Police with crisis calls.

“Preliminary numbers from the new crisis centre’s two months of operation clearly show that it is making a difference,” says NE LHIN CEO Louise Paquette. “We’re seeing people embrace a community model of care, and this is exactly what Northerners have told us they want – more care options in their community.”

With the new hours of operation, the crisis centre’s mobile unit has seen a 102 per cent increase in calls. Since the move to 127 Cedar Street, visits to the office and counseling by phone have increased by 61 per cent. Youth visits have also tripled over the previous year, while overall service volumes have doubled. (Crisis Intervention Services had previously been located at the main hospital site.)

“Sixty per cent of our total program volume has shifted to the community,” says Maureen McLelland, Administrative Director of Sudbury Mental Health and Addiction Centre at HSN. “It is having a positive impact on how quickly patients flow through HSN’s emergency department.”

A key component of this new Community Crisis Model is the training the CMHA and HSN staff have delivered to members of the Greater Sudbury Police Service on how best to respond to

crisis calls, the challenges faced by people with mental health and addictions, as well as how to identify which people are best suited for the Cedar Street location or the mobile crisis unit.

“The officers have been very receptive. Responding to mental health calls in the community is becoming more frequent,” said Sarah Gauthier, one of the instructors from CMHA. “We are providing practical tools to help recognize mental health symptoms and techniques so that officers can respond confidently and quickly. We are also trying to provide an awareness of what someone goes through when experiencing mental illness.”

Besides providing, as Gauthier puts it “a few more tools in their tool box,” the CMHA and HSN, has also developed booklets officers can carry in their back pocket when out on calls. All and all it’s been a positive experience, she said. And it’s already making a difference.

“In all of my in-service training seminars I would qualify this one as one of the most cogent lectures I have attended. I walked out of there with a greater understanding of what a person with mental health challenges faces daily,” said Craig Maki, Administrative Staff Sergeant, GSPS.

Almost 300 Greater Sudbury Police Service staff have completed the training so far. Chief Frank Elsner went on to say how committed the various partners have been to develop a more efficient and effective process for responding to people who are in urgent need of mental health services.

“It is important for all of us to receive ongoing training to ensure we are providing the best possible services to the individuals we support in our community. We commend all of our partners and funders for seeing the value of training and raising awareness in the area of mental health,” said Marion Quigley, CEO of CMHA Sudbury/Manitoulin.

As awareness continues to grow with the launch of a billboard and bus campaign in January, and the hiring of a CMHA Crisis Support Navigator to be stationed in HSN’s Emergency Department, it is expected that more clients will go to 127 Cedar Street for the help they need.

Facts

- Crisis Intervention Services at 127 Cedar Street is available to anyone who is in need of mental health services. **Hours of operation are 8:30 am to 10:00 pm 7 days per week, including holidays.** The public is reminded that Crisis Intervention Services at 127 Cedar Street will be open throughout the winter holidays.
- **Enhanced hours and new location:**
 - Crisis Intervention Services is open 7 days a week, 8:30 am to 10pm, 127 Cedar Street.
 - Mobile crisis unit hours have increased -- 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.
 - **24 hour-helpline:** 705-675-4760

For more information

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