

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Kingston Health Sciences Centre mental health program makes transition from hospital to community

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

KINGSTON, ON – As of Thursday, April 1, Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) will transition a growing mental health program into a larger, community-based footprint at its Belleville location.

KHSC will relocate the western district office of its Heads Up! Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Program from Belleville General Hospital to 250 Sidney St. (the former Nortel building) in Belleville. The western office serves Hastings and Prince Edward Counties plus a small part of Northumberland County.

The move into the community is prompted by rapid growth in the program, which takes an interdisciplinary team approach to assessing, treating and educating persons aged 14 to 35 who are experiencing their first episode of psychosis or have yet to receive treatment for psychosis.

Demand for service has increased due to cannabis legalization and the connection to substance-induced psychosis, as well as to broader acknowledgement of mental health issues and their toll on youth and young adults.

“We know the transition is very welcome news for patients and families,” says Nicholas Axas, program operational director for mental health and addiction care at KHSC.

“They have long expressed their preference for a treatment space outside the hospital setting, which can make people feel stigmatized and institutionalized. The relocation aligns us with other provincial EPI programs, which are typically community based to help provide a more welcoming environment for treatment and support.”

Heads Up! will join an expanding hub of local mental wellness services at its new location. In addition, the site will be accessible, provide free parking for patients and families and allow for more flexibility around scheduling therapy groups and sessions outside of normal business hours.

The new location is expected to be fully operational by April 1.

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