



BULLETIN 19

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Mental Health and Addiction Services

The Facts

As many as 1.6 million adults in Ontario suffer from mood, anxiety, substance use or gambling problems. In the Central West LHIN census data shows that about 2% of the population suffers from a serious mental illness. In cases of people with mental health issues, it is estimated that 29% also show tendencies towards substance abuse.

Mental health and addiction services were identified in the Central West LHIN as a client priority during community discussions and surveys that were used to develop our initial Integrated Health Service Plan (IHSP). The IHSP provides direction for improving the health system locally. We invite you to view this document on our web site at www.centralwestlhin.on.ca.

The Minister of Health and Long Term Care, David Caplan, has identified mental health and addictions as a key provincial priority. In the past five years over \$265 million has been invested to increase the capacity of mental health and addiction services.

"There is a growing awareness that a strong mental health and addiction system is as important as having strong hospitals, public health units and family health care providers. Strengthening it will strengthen our health care services as a whole."

David Caplan
Minister of Health
and Long Term Care

So What is Being Done?

In the 2008 budget a commitment of \$80 million over three years was made towards the continued improvement of mental health and addiction services. As well, an expert advisory panel was put together to advise the Minister on the development of a new 10 year provincial mental health and addictions strategy. This May the Central West LHIN will be holding public forums to ask the local community for their input in the development of this strategy.

Taking Action Close to Home

The Central West LHIN is continuing to work with local providers to ensure that mental health and addiction services are meeting the needs of the local community. These initiatives are headed up by the Central West Mental Health and Addictions Core Action Group, which is comprised of service providers and LHIN representatives, and is chaired by Sandy Milakovic, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Peel Branch.

"This is a group I believe strongly in because it has a direct impact on local services," Milakovic said, "developing a strong system of mental health and addiction services is the goal, and the passion, of every person at that table."



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At the moment the group is involved in a community needs assessment in Malton. This review is following a similar assessment in Dufferin, and is aimed at developing solutions to improve access to mental health and addiction services in the area. This includes identifying how existing services in the LHIN can meet local gaps, and finding ways to increase the capacity of local providers.

"Assessing the needs of the community is a crucial first step in making valuable improvements to local services." Milakovic said, "By working with the community we are getting the information we need to ensure improvements will have the biggest possible impact."

May 4th to the 10th is National Mental Health Awareness Week. For more information on events and educational opportunities please visit the Canadian Mental Health Association website at http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=6-361&lang=1#mhw



On The Radar

Cancer System Quality Index

On April 28th Cancer Care Ontario released the 2009 Cancer System Quality Index. This Index tracks Ontario's progress against cancer, and points out where cancer service providers can make quality and performance improvements. Mimi Lowi-Young, CEO of the Central West LHIN, participated in the announcement of the index to show the practical value of this information in health system planning. "Organizations such as ours really benefit from the Cancer System Quality Index." Mimi said, "The research provides us with valuable benchmarks and targets which inform our strategy for improving local cancer care services." The 2009 Cancer System Quality Index can be found at <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/ocs/qpi/csqi/>.

Swine Flu

The Central West LHIN is closely monitoring "Swine Flu" and its potential impact on local health services. David Butler-Jones, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, recommends taking the following action to protect yourself:

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly
- Use hand sanitizer
- Cough or sneeze into an arm or sleeve rather than your hands
- Stay home if you exhibit any flu like symptoms

For more information please visit or website at

www.centralwestlhin.on.ca