



WWLHNformation

September 2009

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SOLUTIONS

In this edition of the WWLHN bulletin*, we turn our attention to mental health and addictions. It is a far-reaching issue. Almost everyone is affected – whether personally, or through family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances.

The Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, has established an Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions to provide advice on the overall direction and priorities for a 10-year provincial strategy. The Advisory Group created a discussion paper, *Every Door is the Right Door* (currently available for viewing and feedback at www.health.gov.on.ca/mha-feedback).

The discussion paper indicates that at some time in their life, one in five people in Ontario will experience a serious mental illness, harmful substance use, or have a problem with gambling.

Mental illness and addictions generally include a range of issues such as psychotic disorders, substance abuse, addictions including problem gambling, mood and anxiety disorders, personality disorders, eating disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, and dementias.

Mental health and addictions issues are found throughout all sections of society - all ages, cultures and backgrounds. Waterloo Wellington has seen an increase in the prevalence of mental health and addictions issues. Student drug use is increasing as is the prevalence of mental health conditions among youth. We know there are challenges in accessing

coordinated mental health and addictions services in our community.

The WWLHN is aligned with the province's focus on mental health and addictions and has put a high priority on moving forward with local initiatives that will improve the coordination of, and access to, mental health and addictions services. We've made a good start – here are some of the initiatives.

The WWLHN recently made an important investment to address mental health and addictions issues among youth. Ray of Hope (Kitchener), and Portage Program for Drug Dependencies (Elora), two organizations that assist our youth, received \$2.5 million to develop an integrated residential youth addiction treatment program. This program, which began on April 1, 2009, will provide youth with treatment through 16 new residential beds as well as community-based support for almost 200 youth.

North Wellington Health Care and Homewood Health Centre have formed a new partnership to address the need for North Wellington residents to have access to mental health beds. Through WWLHN funding of \$550,000, two beds and staff are available at Homewood to meet the needs of North Wellington residents specifically. In addition, Homewood provides professional resources to North Wellington hospitals to facilitate patients' assessment and treatment.

Recognizing that accessibility to addiction treatment services is an issue in Waterloo Wellington, the WWLHN approved an investment of \$215,000 in the Bridges to Health program for women. The program

provides services for 160 women across Waterloo Wellington. Through Bridges to Health, local private and public health care professionals assist women with parenting responsibilities and those who need quick access to service.

Guelph General Hospital, Homewood Health Centre and Trellis Mental Health and Developmental Services have collaborated to provide emergency mental health services to patients in a new, dedicated space located at Guelph General Hospital. This new space enables appropriate, sensitive care and, at the same time, redirects care from the hospital emergency department.

The WWLHIN has been supporting specific programs and initiatives that are part of our Aging At Home strategy (please visit our website for more information). Many of these will assist and support seniors with mental health and addictions issues.

Four organizations had been working together informally under the banner of Self Help Alliance. These consumer survivor support groups are Waterloo Region Self Help for Psychiatric Consumer/Survivor, Mutual Aid with Psychiatric Survivors of Wellington and Dufferin Incorporated, Mood Disorders Association of Waterloo Region, and Cambridge Active Self Help Organization.

The four organizations amalgamated into the Self Help Alliance Waterloo Wellington, and formalized the integration of services and administration in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association – Grand River Branch. The partnership is a effective way to ensure the long-term, stable provision of services for community members, while valuing the important role of an independent consumer voice providing input into health care planning.

Another initiative that will bring positive results in the future is the creation of the Waterloo Wellington Addiction and Mental Health Network. The network, consisting of more than 40 health service providers, and with the assistance of a newly funded coordinator, is a forum that gives these providers a new connectedness as they work together to develop an integrated and recovery-oriented addiction and mental health system.

Several additional initiatives will add much-needed capacity to the system. They include the introduction of 50 longer term, mental health beds that will be moving from London to Grand River Hospital's Freeport site in 2010, and the introduction of 16 new addictions supportive housing beds in 2009-2010.

Our goals, both short term and long term, are to provide mental health and addictions services in an appropriate setting, to provide information so consumers can make informed choices in seeking treatment, and to create a web of interconnected mental health inpatient, community, and residential services to support them. While there is more work to do, we are well on our way and the community will see changes in the upcoming months and years.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra J. Hanmer".

Sandra Hanmer
Chief Executive Officer

**The WWLHIN has been issuing a series of these WWLHINformation bulletins – each focusing on a specific topic of interest around health care in our community. To read the past bulletins, I invite you to visit our website at www.wwlhin.on.ca*

LIVE AND LIVE WELL IN WATERLOO WELLINGTON

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