

Community Meeting re: former Bethesda Centre

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 6:30 pm – London Children’s Museum

Speaking Remarks for Sandy Whittall, Vice President Mental Health

Thank you and I’m pleased to be here this evening to share information with you regarding the two LHSC Mental Health programs that we plan to move into the Bethesda Centre later this year.

Let me start by saying we will be relocating 39 staff and 6 physicians from LHSC as well there will be 2 CMHA–Middlesex staff per eight hour shift for the residence along with the respective clients to the former Bethesda Centre. As a program we are so thrilled with this opportunity to provide care in the community. It is the norm throughout the world that many mental health services are provided in community and residential settings.

The Adult Eating Disorders Service has been looking for a permanent home since its inception in 2012. This program has been developed to meet the needs of adults who require treatment for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and other eating disorders. The program is provided through a strong partnership between LHSC and the Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex.

As Murray mentioned, both the outpatient clinic and the residential treatment components of the program are currently located in separate leased spaces in the community. The move to Bethesda provides us with the opportunity to consolidate the program and we will be better able to serve the needs of the patients – and we can do so without increasing costs to the hospital.

The Adult Eating Disorders Intensive Treatment Service provides group treatment four days per week from 8:30 – 6:30 p.m. Individuals who require a higher level of support to interrupt their symptoms will receive support 24/7 while living in a fully staffed residence. The 8 unit residence will operate in partnership with CMHA–Middlesex.

I should also mention that the program has a “family day” every couple of months.

We are also currently working on the model for food service delivery which may occur twice daily – seven days a week. It goes without saying that it is our intention to be a good neighbour and to avoid the presence of large truck traffic and noise in a residential neighbourhood.

The Adult Eating Disorders Service is committed to promoting acceptance, hope, and the spirit of discovery in those we serve. We are thrilled about the opportunity to move into the community as it will allow all the components of our program to be accessed in one space, creating a seamless opportunity to deliver care. We are also excited about the beautiful setting as it will provide greater opportunities for reflection and recovery.

PAUSE

As Murray mentioned, the second program that we plan to move into Bethesda is the PEPP program. PEPP is a clinical and research program in early psychosis intervention and is staffed by an interdisciplinary team including psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, a psychologist, teacher, recreation therapist and an employment counsellor. We are proud that PEPP has published in over 100 peer reviewed journals, and that a number of our staff and physicians sit on provincial panels and have been asked to participate in international forums and conferences. We have also been asked to mentor new programs across the province and the country.

The program serves individuals between the ages of 16 and 40 with a first episode of psychosis. The majority of people who develop psychosis are between the ages of 16 and 25 years. Many of the PEPP clients are in high school or attending Fanshawe College or Western University.

Psychosis is a medical condition affecting the brain that causes a loss of contact with reality. Some of the symptoms people may experience include hallucinations such as hearing voices, changes in thinking and communication difficulties. Approximately 3 in 100 people will develop psychosis in their lifetime which is more than the 1 in 100 people who will be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Treatment focuses on medication to reduce symptoms and providing education and support so that people can continue working toward their goals such as school, work, relationships, etc.

Clients receive individual support and also attend groups that focus on recreation, the arts, education and general wellness. Such groups may be in the building or in other community centres such as the YMCA. The majority of the group activities are held during the day time; however, there are a couple of group meetings in the early evening and a family workshop three times a year on a Saturday.

Most of the PEPP clients will be walking, taking the bus or riding their bikes to appointments and they will be using the Riverview Ave entrance.

We work very hard in the PEPP program to reduce the stigma of mental health. We have an active Parent Support Group, we host bake sales and an bi-annual art show featuring the creations of our clients. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss with you ways to engage the community with the PEPP program. We were really delighted to hear that the community is interested in creating a community garden.

I would also be happy to organize a tour for anyone in the community who would like to see the current PEPP program operations at the hospital to get an idea of our activities, etc. I should also mention that PEPP was, until three years ago when it moved to Victoria Hospital, located in the SOHO community.

In closing I want to emphasize that the PEPP program is a key service that helps clients live their own, independent life – whether at school, work or in their community. To date, PEPP has successfully served 885 clients since the beginning of 1997 and we are excited to continue this positive legacy in a new facility where we know our patients will have excellent outcomes.

I thank you again for attending tonight's meeting and I look forward to working together with you to address your comments and concerns and ideas.