

Media Release

Improving the Quality of Life and Health Outcomes for People Experiencing a Mental Health or Addictions Crisis

Joint Mobile Crisis Response Team to provide coordinated response

Thunder Bay, ON, April 12, 2018 – The North West LHIN will provide \$403,700 in one-time funding to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Thunder Bay to implement a Joint Mobile Crisis Response Team (JMCRT), in partnership with the Thunder Bay Police Services.

The JMCRT, which includes a mental health crisis response worker and if required, a uniformed police officer, will provide a coordinated response to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis in the City of Thunder Bay.

The team may employ a range of interventions such as:

- providing mental health supports in the community;
- referring individuals to community-based mental health services;
- enabling admissions to a crisis support residence; or
- facilitating transport to a hospital emergency department

According to CMHA Thunder Bay, services will be up and running by June of this year and will be offered from 2:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. seven days a week.

The North West LHIN worked closely with the Thunder Bay Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Thunder Bay police and other local stakeholders to develop an improved crisis response system which includes effective education and training for police and health professionals. All police officers completed the training by the end of July 2016 in preparation for this new program.

QUOTES

“We are very pleased with this investment that supports a partnership between the City of Thunder Bay Police and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Thunder Bay. This model of care, in which a police officer and a mental health worker support individuals with mental health and addictions issues, will help to reduce reliance on the emergency department and avoid admissions to hospital where possible. The North West LHIN acknowledges the commitment and leadership of the CMHA in Thunder Bay and the City Police for their collaboration in helping individuals who face a mental health crisis.”

- Laura Kokocinski, CEO, North West LHIN

“CMHA-Thunder Bay is thrilled to be receiving this new funding and looks forward to bringing expanded crisis response services to residents of Thunder Bay who are in need of this support. The success of this announcement is a shared success and I would like to thank the members of the Steering Committee. To launch a new service like this not only takes vision it takes administrative effort and this project would not be happening without their efforts. I also want to thank Chief of Police Jean Paul Levesque and North West LHIN CEO, Laura Kokocinski for beginning the conversation almost three years ago. We look forward to and are honored to be supporting individuals in distress in our community in a new way.”

- Sharon Pitawanakwat, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association, Thunder Bay

“The Thunder Bay Police Service is very excited to see the creation of the Joint Mobile Crisis Response Team and to work hand in hand with the Thunder Bay Canadian Mental Health Association and their mental health crisis response workers. The police are not always the answer to mental health issues in our community and a visit to the emergency department should not be the only option available to our officers. Individuals in crisis should be getting the support they need at the time of the incident and it is imperative that we work together with CMHA to better serve this clientele. The creation of the Joint Mobile Crisis Team will also reduce pressure on police services and eliminate long wait times at the hospital for police officers. This project will also provide other options for patients who need help but may not need to be apprehended under the Ontario Mental Health Act. We look forward to working with CMHA on this new project.”

- Jean Paul Levesque, Chief of Police, Thunder Bay Police

QUICK FACTS

- The North West LHIN has identified the need for a comprehensive, integrated, and regional model of care for Mental Health and Addictions – one that incorporates awareness, education, assessment, early intervention and long-term supports.
- The North West LHIN is responsible for planning, funding and integrating local health services as well as delivering home and community care services. The North West LHIN holds accountability agreements with hospitals, long-term care homes, community health centres, mental health and addictions agencies, and other community support services.
- The North West LHIN and its Board of Directors are responsible for more than \$675 million of health care services delivered in Northwestern Ontario.

LEARN MORE

For more information, please visit our website: www.northwestlhin.on.ca

MEDIA CONTACTS

Petronilla Ndebele, Director, Communications and Engagement

North West LHIN

807-684-9425, extension 2039

Toll free 1-866-907-5446

Email: petronilla.ndebele@lhins.on.ca or nw.communications@lhins.on.ca

Sharon Pitawanakwat, CEO

Canadian Mental Health Association, Thunder Bay

Telephone: 807-345-5564 extension

Email: spitawanakwat@cmha-tb.on.ca

Deputy Chief Sylvie Hauth #518, MAC, CMM III Police Executive

Thunder Bay Police Service

Telephone: (807) 684-1200 extension 3518

Email: sylvie.hauth@thunderbaypolice.ca