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Local Adult Mental Health and Addictions Organizations Considering Amalgamation

Three organizations which provide adult mental health and addictions services are working towards creation of a single new community agency to enhance services for clients and families.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by Canadian Mental Health Association Grey Bruce, G & B House, and HopeGreyBruce Mental Health & Addiction Services. Grey Bruce Health Services (GBHS), which serves a large population of outpatient adult clients seeking mental health and addictions support, is also part of the MOU and will be working with the group to transition some of its services to the new agency.

Each of the organizations provides high quality services, but from a patient perspective, it can be challenging to understand which organization best meets patient needs, and to move between the four different providers. Each of the partners agrees that a new single community entity, which builds on the staff expertise and program strengths of the existing organizations, will improve access and coordination for all patients.

GBHS has inpatient and outpatient services for adult addictions and mental health. The focus is on transitioning outpatient services into the new organization. No decisions have yet been made regarding which GBHS outpatient services will move to the new organization.

Board members and senior management representatives from the four partner organizations have been meeting since the fall of 2015 to discuss opportunities and strategies for increasing collaboration. The South West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) has provided funds to facilitate the process to date.

Funding for the health care sector is shrinking, yet the demand for mental health and addictions services are growing, particularly in Grey Bruce.

“The South West LHIN is pleased that CMHA Grey Bruce, HopeGreyBruce, G&B House and Grey Bruce Health Services have come together in an effort to better serve the needs of people living with mental health issues in Bruce and Grey Counties,” said Michael Barrett, CEO, South West LHIN. “Although all four organizations have worked closely together for many years, the LHIN believes that this proposed amalgamation will further improve access and coordination of mental health and addiction services for area residents, and care providers.”

A new community organization can reduce duplication, improve operating efficiencies, and help ensure mental health and addiction services in this region remain strong.

Before the transition process can officially begin, the organizations still need to negotiate a Transition Agreement which will guide next steps. It is expected that an Agreement will take effect in May, 2017. Full integration of the three organizations plus integration of some portion of GBHS outpatient services is likely to take more than a year, and requires LHIN approval.

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