

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THREE PARTNERING COMMUNITY CENTRES OPEN THEIR DOORS TO YOUTH DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

NEW BRUNSWICK May 4, 2017 - ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick (ACCESS OM NB) is pleased to announce partnerships with three provincial community organizations that will enable them to open their doors to young people struggling with mental health challenges and improve access to integrated mental health care.

As the only provincial demonstration site of 12 ACCESS Open Minds sites across Canada, ACCESS OM NB has taken a community approach to youth mental health system transformation, through our work with: (1) The Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne Inc.; (2) P.E.E.R SJ (Saint John) and; (3) the Elsipogtog First Nation community.

ACCESS Open Minds is a national research project in youth mental health co-funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Graham Boeckh Foundation. In New Brunswick, the project is also co-funded by the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF). As a research and evaluation project funded to develop, test and evaluate a new, evidence-informed framework of mental health care, the vision for ACCESS OM NB is that youth (ages 11 to 25) who live with mental health challenges are able to:

- Get care **earlier**.
- Get care **quicker**.
- Get **better** care.
- **Continue** to get care as they grow into young adults.
- Have a **voice** in the kind of mental health care they receive.

Since the release of the *Connecting the Dots* and *Staying Connected* reports by the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate's (CYA) Office in 2008, the New Brunswick Government has led the transformation of services for children and youth with complex mental health and behavioural needs through the creation of the Network of Excellence (NOE) and the award-winning Integrated Services Delivery (ISD) model. ACCESS OM NB aims to support this transformation by offering safe communities and spaces across the province. As part of its operations, each safe space will provide program delivery and activities that support the formal mental health service delivery by the province. These programs will focus on prevention, mental wellness and mental resiliency.

In the most recent 2016, State of the Child Report, published annually by the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate Office, it is reported that:

- In New Brunswick, the rate of youth hospitalization due to mental health issues was almost 50% higher than Canadian average and;

- Many New Brunswick youth reported that they were unhappy with the mental health care that they are receiving.

Much work remains.

The Research Approach

Under the research leadership of Dr. Jimmy Bourque, Youth Mental Health Research Chair located at the Université de Moncton and his team, ACCESS OM NB plans to use a combination of data collection and stakeholder engagement to bring positive change to the ways in which youth with mental health challenges receive and experience services until 2020. Through the ACCESS Open Minds Evaluation Protocol and Indicators as well as a cost-benefit analysis, the research and evaluation activities will focus on mapping and functioning of available community resources, identifying mental health challenges faced by young people and the cost-efficiency of the ACCESS OM NB initiative.

Designed for and with young people

In order to succeed, the project depends on the involvement and leadership of youth, as well as families and carers in both developing the model and conducting research.

Andrew Hall is the Chair of the ACCESS OM NB Provincial Youth Council. The Council has approximately 15 youth that are actively involved in every decision and initiative ACCESS OM NB undertakes. They have been a vital part of the project since 2015, and champions for ACCESS OM NB in both their communities and on a provincial scale through our stigma-reduction campaigns, and presentations in provincial, national, and international forums.

With the opening of these three partnering communities, the ACCESS OM NB Provincial Youth Council plans to visit each organization to deliver engagement training to the youth who will be leading the transformation at the community level, and help each community establish a youth council of their own.

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QUOTES:

Mr. Andrew Hall, Chair of the ACCESS OM NB Provincial Youth Council

“It is a long-term vision for ACCESS OM NB that through the empowerment of youth and First Nations youth, ACCESS OM NB will ensure improved mental health for all New Brunswick youth through the right supports, at the right time, in the right place, and at the right intensity.”

Ms. Eva Sock and Ms. Roxanne Sappier, Co-chairs of the ACCESS OM NB First Nations Committee

“As representatives from the First Nations communities, we have been able to share our strengths and experiences with the ACCESS OM NB project in an authentic way. We believe that ACCESS OM NB can make a big difference in the lives of First Nations youth by respecting their cultural diversity and by ensuring that mental health services are offered in a culturally safe environment.”

Superintendent Rick Shaw, Senior Police Executive, RCMP and Chair of the ACCESS OM NB Steering Committee

“The goal for ACCESS OM NB is to support the work of the Province by providing more options for youth all over New Brunswick – these three partnering communities are just the beginning. We look forward to expanding the number of sites throughout the province as resources allow.”

Dr Ashok Malla, Nominated Principal Investigator, ACCESS Open Minds

“We are delighted to welcome Centre Bénévolant de la Péninsule Acadienne, P.E.E.R. Saint John, and Elsipogtog First Nation to the National ACCESS Open Minds youth mental health service transformation and research project. These three communities represent the diversity of New Brunswick and Canada and through their participation they will contribute to generating innovative Canadian evidence that will help improve outcomes for Canadian youth with mental health problems.”

Mr. Ian Boeckh President and Director of the Graham Boeckh Foundation

“With the opening of the three community sites in ACCESS OM NB, youth and families will be able to rapidly access non-stigmatizing and high-quality mental health services in the community. This is an important milestone and we hope this approach can serve other communities in the province.”

Mr. Christian Whalen, Deputy Advocate and Senior Legal Counsel, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate for New Brunswick, National Executive Committee Liaison and Site Lead for ACCESS OM NB

“Within the national ACCESS OM transformation, New Brunswick has always positioned itself as the first jurisdiction in Canada that will achieve a province wide transformation in service delivery to child and youth mental health clients. The launch of these safe spaces within our first three partnering communities - in francophone, anglophone and First Nations regions - and the phased-in replication of these pilots in other parts of the province will help bring about the desired change.”

Honourable Victor Boudreau, Minister of Health, Government of New Brunswick

“Although we continue to work diligently to expand the integrated service delivery model for children and youth throughout the province and ensure a connected, seamless delivery of care through the Network of Excellence, we understand that community plays a crucial role in supporting children, youth and their families struggling with these issues. ACCESS OM NB working collaboratively with the Network of Excellence will demonstrate how the formal mental health care system and community working together and sharing common goals can better meet the needs of children, youth and families.”

Dr Bruno Battistini, President, CEO and Scientific Director of the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation (NBHRF), one of the co-funder of the ACCESS OM NB project

“We are committed to CIHR-SPOR-TRAM-ACCESS since gathering the NB team in February 2013. The various and engaged stakeholders have made this a reality through hard, committed and relentless engagement to make this a provincial-wide model. It has inscribed itself as part of the continuum of care regrouped under the NB Network of Excellence on mental health. For those reasons, supported by an independent research process, we support this youth-centred initiative.”

Mr. Bernard Lord, CEO, Medavie

“As a supporter of PEER SJ since its inception, we are pleased to be part of this broader, province-wide initiative that will allow us to transition and extend our support for PEER SJ and other existing - and future - ACCESS sites. Supporting innovative and evidenced-based solutions in ensuring youth have access to appropriate mental health care in living their best lives is a key focus of our Foundation. We look forward to learning from the research component, which may inform future initiatives across New Brunswick and beyond.”

To learn more about the project, please visit accessopenminds.ca ; Facebook: [ACCESSOMNB](https://www.facebook.com/ACCESSOMNB/); Twitter: [@ACCESSNB](https://twitter.com/ACCESSNB) ; Instagram: @ACCESSNB

For interviews, please contact:

Ms. Alysha Elliott , Communications Officer, New Brunswick Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (NB SPOR) and NBHRF, (506) 476-5327, communications.nbhrf@nbhrf.com

BACKGROUND

The ACCESS OM NB Team and our Partnering Communities

Our team is made up of diverse youth, families and carers, First Nations communities, community organizations, researchers, decision-makers, and service providers. ACCESS OM NB believes that to ensure sustainability and to support the Government of New Brunswick's goal to provide the best outcomes and services for New Brunswick youth, we need all voices at the table.

In the Spring of 2016, ACCESS OM NB put out a Call for Expressions of Interest for potential Partnering Communities. Our Selection Committee was composed of representatives from all of our stakeholder groups, and reviewed a total of 13 applications. The committee selected three organizations, that they believed, best fit with ACCESS OM NB's values and mission, as well as represented the diversity of the province of NB.

Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne Inc.

The Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule Acadienne's mission is to work towards promotion and outreach of volunteer work and to analyze the socioeconomic needs of the territory it serves as well as the development of resources to meet those needs. Many CBPA programs target youth and families. Considering the complex nature of offering services in a rural yet large territory such as the Acadian Peninsula, the CBPA ACCESS site adheres to a mobile approach aiming to go out and meet youth.

Elsipogtog First Nations Health and Wellness Centre

Community Wellness and Development coordinates and facilitates its implementation by supporting and securing funds for the community and youth services. Community, Leisure, and Culture Development (CLCD) provides recreational, sport and cultural services to the community. CLCD provides a weekly drop in service for youth ages 7—18 called "Safe Space". Staff also run a March Break program, seasonal activities and events, and a 6-week summer camp program for youth. CLCD provides sports events and leagues, cultural dances and craft classes and many other cultural related events and activities. It also organizes and implements community events of Elsipogtog First Nation.

P.E.E.R SJ

P.E.E.R. SJ, which stands for Peers Engaged in Education and Recovery, is a community-based, addiction and mental health service that focuses on establishing and maintaining mental wellness in youth. Located in Saint John, New Brunswick, staff work with individuals to help them meet personal goals such as success in school, finding employment, safe and affordable housing and social and emotional concerns.