**MEDIA RELEASE** April 2023

**Cambridge North Dumfries Ontario Health Team**

**Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinic Pilot Project**

CAMBRIDGE – For the past three weeks, the Cambridge North Dumfries Ontario Health Team (CND OHT) has been piloting an eight-week Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinic (CMAC). The CMAC is intended to improve quick access to mental health and addictions treatment, improve the patient experience in navigating treatment and alleviate system pressures.

*It can be very difficult for people who need help with mental health or addictions in Cambridge to get help.  Long wait lists and fragmented services are familiar problems for patients, and for health providers trying to help.  The hope is that a clinic like this will provide faster and more concrete connections to existing people and services, especially when people have urgent concerns and are sitting on waiting lists.  The approach of our local OHT is a huge opportunity to help our system work better together for everyone.*

**Dr. Craig Albrecht, Lead CMAC physician**

*Issues with mental health and addiction remain highly stigmatized in the community, and that is why it is so important for safe spaces like this to be available for individuals dealing with these specialized needs. I look forward to welcoming individuals from within the community into a non-judgmental space where they can be provided the care they need from a multidisciplinary team of professionals. Please know, we are here for you, to walk alongside you to wellness.*

**Jessica Hill, CMAC Peer Worker**

The CMAC is being coordinated by several CND OHT Members and community partners, including:

* Langs
* Waterloo Region Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
* Canadian Mental Health Association – Waterloo Wellington
* Two Rivers Family Health Team
* Porchlight Counselling and Addictions Services
* Grandview Medical Centre Family Health Team
* House of Friendship
* Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services
* Region of Waterloo Public Health

The CMAC is collaboratively staffed by partners. The staff team includes a prescriber, counsellors, peer workers, outreach workers and a CMHA service coordinator.

The goal of the CMAC is to address immediate needs and ensure a comprehensive follow-up plan is put in place for each client. Services offered at the clinic include:

* Clinical Evaluation
* Counselling Services
* Follow-up Planning and Service Coordination

To reduce barriers and increase accessibility to the clinic:

* No appointment is necessary
* Patients of all ages are accepted at the clinic
* A health card is not required, nor is a referral from a primary care provider

To date, the clinic has seen over 40 individuals, ranging in age from 7-91 years. In addition to these initial visits, over 64 follow-ups have been completed, resulting in over 109 patient encounters in just three weeks.All clients surveyed indicated that they were very satisfied with the care received at the CMAC.

**CMAC Partnership Expansion**

Beginning on Tuesday, April 4 Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services will begin a pilot of bringing those with appropriate mental health and addictions conditions to the CMAC. This change is being made in collaboration with the Cambridge Memorial Hospital Emergency Department and will allow paramedics to divert mental health and addictions calls. The CND OHT and Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services are working in partnership to evaluate the impact of this pilot.

**CMAC Sustainability**

Early evaluation and feedback from the community has suggested that the CMAC is already having a significant impact. The CND OHT recognizes the value and importance of the CMAC and is in the process of submitting funding proposals to secure funding so that this clinic can become a permanent resource for the Cambridge and North Dumfries communities.

*I have been struggling with severe depression and anxiety for over 2 years. I’ve tried multiple different programs, but everything is a 10 month wait. We need something accessible that will be easier. I’m in crisis mode and it is a 9+ month wait anywhere else. CMAC has been able to help me this week. We need more programs like CMAC. Where they have accessibility to programs and help me now.*

**Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinic Patient, March 2023**

**Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinic Details**

Duration: March 7 – April 28, 2023

Days of Operation: Tuesday - Saturday

Hours of Operation: 1300 – 2100h (1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.) *Last appointment taken at 8 p.m. Less busy times 5-8pm.*

Location: Cambridge Memorial Hospital, Wing C, Level 3

Further information about the clinic can be found at www.cndoht.com.

**About the Ontario Health Team**

The Cambridge North Dumfries Ontario Health Team (CND OHT) is a collaborative of over forty health and social service provider agencies from Cambridge, North Dumfries and the Waterloo Region. The CND OHT envisions a community where people access seamless and integrated services to ensure the health and wellbeing of our diverse populations.

The Ontario government introduced Ontario Health Teams to support a connected health care system centred around patients, families and caregivers. Ontario Health Teams strengthen local services, making it easier for patients to navigate the system and transition between providers. For more information about the CND OHT, please visit cndoht.com.

For all media inquiries, please contact:

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