

News Release

Government of Canada funds local research project aimed at improving mental health services for homeless youth

For immediate release

London, ON (March 1, 2010) – Youth in London-Middlesex may benefit from a new research project seeking to understand the service delivery preferences of youth, as well as the outcomes of these choices. Local researchers will be concurrently testing and evaluating three approaches for street level interventions for youth who are homeless and who have severe or moderate mental illness or those living with an undiagnosed mental illness. This project is among 19 new health services research projects announced today in New Brunswick by the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, on behalf of the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health.

“These research projects target important health issues facing Canadians and will provide results tailored to the needs of health policy decision-makers,” said Minister Ashfield. “Our government is committed to working with our provincial and territorial counterparts, who are responsible for health care delivery, by supporting innovative, solution-based research.”

The projects are funded through Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)’s Partnership for Health System Improvement (PHSI) program, which aims to strengthen Canada's healthcare system through collaborative, applied and policy-relevant research. The Government of Canada is providing \$6.3 million to support the 19 projects. Partners from across Canada are providing an additional \$4.3 million. The projects were selected through a rigorous, independent, peer-review process.

“CIHR is increasing its focus on solution-based research and knowledge translation – that is, making users aware of new knowledge or innovations and facilitating their use,” said Dr. Alain Beaudet, President of CIHR. “Knowledge translation programs like PHSI have a huge potential to pay Canadians a dividend on their investment in health research.”

This project is being lead by Dr. Cheryl Forchuk, Assistant Director at Lawson Health Research Institute and Acting Associate Director of Nursing Research, Health Sciences and the Department of Psychiatry at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, The University of Western Ontario. Through the study, Dr. Forchuk is hoping to better understand where the focus of early interventions and preventative diversion strategies should be. “The information we gain through this project will allow us to better identify weaknesses in services offered,” explains Forchuk. “We will then be able to

develop treatment options that youth will be receptive to.” Along with funding from CIHR, this project is supported by the Mental Health Commission and the City of London.

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About CIHR

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's agency for health research. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to catalyze its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health-care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 13,000 health researchers and trainees across Canada. www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

About Lawson Health Research Institute

As the research institute of London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care, London, and working in partnership with The University of Western Ontario, Lawson Health Research Institute is committed to furthering scientific knowledge to advance health care around the world.

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