Introducing the new Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care

Celebrating the future, honouring the past

Mental Health Care In Elgin
Congratulations...

“...There’s a strong history of excellence in mental health care in this region and this new facility will continue that tradition in a modern setting. I’m very pleased that patients will receive the dignified care that will help them on the road to recovery. Congratulations to all!”

Deb Matthews
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

“I am happy to congratulate St. Joseph’s Health Care London on the opening of the new Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care. This state of the art facility, designed to support excellence in mental health care and recovery will certainly be a source of pride within Elgin County.”

Glen Murray
Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation

“It takes a community to provide an effective network of mental health care services. As the organization responsible for planning, funding and integrating health services in Elgin County, the South West LHIN is grateful to the mental health organizations who are working together in a strong network of partnerships to improve mental health care for patients and clients in this area.”

Michael Barrett
CEO South West Local Health Integration Network

LEARN MORE
For more information on St. Joseph’s role in mental health care transformation, visit: www.sjhc.london.on.ca/mentalhealthtransformation

CONTACT US
Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care
401 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas ON N5R 3C6 Phone: 519 646-6100
Celebrating the future, Honouring the past

WELCOME TO THIS SPECIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE ST. THOMAS-ELGIN COMMUNITY AND PARTNERS ACROSS THE REGION. THIS IS A TIME OF BOTH PIVOTAL CHANGE AND ACHIEVEMENT OF NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE ROLE OF HOSPITALS AND COMMUNITIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE. THIS IS A TIME TO MARK THE MORE THAN 70 YEARS OF CARE AND COMMUNITY IN THIS REGION.

It is also a time to ensure together, we continue to build awareness of mental illness, the human, social and economic impacts, the journey to recovery and the importance of investing in better systems of care and supports.

As we celebrate the opening of the new Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care, we want to assure you of the continuation of our other specialized mental health programs for the people in this region. We also share information on forensic mental health care – a service that has been provided for more than 35 years at the existing facility. Now, after many years of planning, this team moves into the most advanced, responsive and dignified facility of its kind.

We are grateful – for a community and region that first welcomed mental health care in 1939, and has been very involved in supporting patients and staff ever since; for all those who through many years of planning, delays and more planning, have helped to make a vision for the future a reality today. We thank everyone who plays a role as a care provider, volunteer, researcher, donor and advocate.

Here and across our unique role areas at Regional Mental Health Care London, St. Joseph’s Hospital, Parkwood Hospital, Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care and many teams across Southwestern Ontario, we will continue to work to earn your complete confidence in the care we provide and make a lasting difference in the quest to live fully.

**Dr. Gillian Kernaghan**
President and CEO
St. Joseph’s Health Care London
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“We are grateful. For a community and region that first welcomed mental health care in 1939, and has been very involved in supporting patients and staff ever since.”
In 2001 St. Joseph’s Health Care London assumed governance of both the London and St. Thomas mental health facilities at a pivotal time in the history and evolution of mental health care. Building on an already established foundation of excellence in care, we took on the challenge of transforming mental health care within the system, our region and our facilities, alongside care providers, community partners and government stakeholders.

The below timeline illustrates both the legacy of care and the journey of mental health transformation in Elgin County as we have moved away from an institutionalized model of care, where a patient stayed in hospital for a long period of time- to a recovery model of care, one of hope and healing, where the goal is to help individuals who have mental health conditions live healthy, satisfying, and productive lives in their communities.

IN THE BEGINNING
In August of 1937 construction began on what was then known as the Ontario Hospital, St. Thomas. Built on the land of six area farm families, for the purpose of treating people with psychiatric illness, the hospital accepted its first 32 patients in April of 1939. By August of the same year, almost 1100 patients had come to reside at the hospital.

THE WAR YEARS
Shortly after the declaration of World War II in September of 1939, Premier Mitchell Hepburn and the Province of Ontario negotiated to lease the hospital buildings to the Department of National Defense in support of the war effort. By late October 1939, patients were relocated to other facilities across the province and hospital grounds became a training base for more than 60,000 air force personnel in the service, repair and maintenance of RCAF aircraft. At the end of the war the facility was returned to the Ontario Department of Health and restored to a fully functioning psychiatric hospital.

Since its beginnings in 1939, the mental health facility in Central Elgin, has been at the forefront of innovation in the delivery of mental health services. With a long, full, and diverse history, the hospital has been at the core of mental health treatment and care, serving the region for over 70 years.
in Central Elgin continues...

“THE MOST ADVANCED IN THE DOMINION”

Upon re-opening in November of 1945 the hospital, in the words of Superintendent Dr. Lynch was “the most advanced in the Dominion.” By April of 1958, hospital admissions peaked at a total of 2238 patients. During this time, the facility pioneered many innovative approaches that supported patient health and well-being. One unique development during this time included the establishment of a 463 acre farm that provided staff and patients with the means and opportunity to participate in food production for the entire hospital.

THE REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE ERA

In January 2001, St. Joseph’s took over governance of the former St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital. This reorganization of mental health care was ordered by the Health Care Restructuring Commission (HSRC) in 1997. HSRC directives also called for the divestment of a certain number of long term specialized inpatient beds from St. Joseph’s to hospitals across southwestern Ontario and the construction of two new specialized mental health care facilities, one in London and one in St. Thomas.

A TIME OF CHANGE – THE SEVENTIES TO NINETIES

The 1970’s through the new millennium was a time of significant change in the life of the hospital. Of notable interest was the introduction of the forensic mental health program in 1976. This period of time also saw the beginnings of mental health transformation. It was based on a new way of thinking; shifting care wherever possible, from an institutionalized model where some patients could spend long periods of time, often years, within the walls of a mental health facility to living productively in the community with proper support and resources.

SOUTHWEST CENTRE FOR FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The state of the art hospital has been built on the existing lands in Central Elgin- next to and replacing the existing RMHC St. Thomas building. Opening in June 2013, the new facility, entirely devoted to forensic psychiatry, better supports staff and a recovery model of care for patients by creating healing environments, providing a neighborhood and community setting which allows for individual growth and skill development and enables patients to return to community living more successfully.
Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care

With 89 beds and 233,640 square feet of contemporary, therapeutic space, the new facility in Central Elgin will make a marked difference for patients, families and care providers. As a provincial resource it will provide comprehensive inpatient and outpatient services including assessment, treatment, outreach and support services to individuals with a mental illness who have come into significant contact with the criminal justice system.

Designed with intent and built with purpose, this space will help our highly skilled team of health professionals care for people in healing environments that foster dignity, create hope and promote individual growth and skill development.

As patients progress in their recovery, they will journey through the specially-designed facility; a balance between safety, security, privacy and healing spaces.

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Q&A

DR. CRAIG BEACH, PHYSICIAN LEADER, FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY PROGRAM AT THE NEW CENTRE, EXPLAINS WHAT MAKES FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH CARE UNIQUE.

Q. WHAT IS FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY?
A. Forensic psychiatry is devoted to caring for people with a mental illness who have also come into contact with the law. Staff and physicians within various forensic programs assist patients towards their personal recovery journeys and the realization of their hopes and dreams. Through intensive work with our team, patients are able to develop the skills and supports needed to successfully reintegrate back into their communities.

Q. HOW DOES THE FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM WORK?
A. Forensic patients are individuals who have been declared either unfit to stand trial, have been found not criminally responsible on account of a mental health issue, or are referred for assessment by the criminal justice system. Forensic beds are managed under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Review Board (ORB). The ORB annually reviews the status and progress of each patient.

Q. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PATIENTS LEAVE THE HOSPITAL?
A. Individuals who have made a transition back to community living continue as outpatients through the forensic outreach team (FOT) and remain under the disposition of the ORB. Rehabilitation continues within the community and includes supports such as vocational skills training.

Our team works closely with other community agencies across the region to link individuals with ongoing supports.

“Mental illness of any kind should not be hidden. The earlier people can get help, the earlier they can be on the road to recovery.”

Dr. Craig Beach
Physician Leader, Forensic Psychiatry Program
Mental health care services in Elgin County

St. Joseph’s is committed to strong partnerships to promote mental health and well-being and respond to the needs of people requiring specialized mental health and addictions services. We are proud to be part of a network of organizations, teams and family physicians in Elgin and across Southwestern Ontario. Listed below are a few contacts for your information.

For a full online health services directory in Elgin County visit www.thehealthline.ca

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SERVICES
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Elgin Branch
  - 24 Hour Support Line - 519 631-2180 or toll free 1-888-631-2180.
- Kid’s Help Phone - 1-800-668-6868
- Emergency Department – St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital or call 911

ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENT CARE
Acute mental health inpatient services will be provided by St. Joseph’s mental health facility in London until these services transfer to St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital in the fall of 2013.

ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH OUTPATIENT CARE
The acute mental health outpatient clinic is temporarily located at 34 Churchill Crescent in the city of St. Thomas. Outpatient services will move to St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital in the fall of 2013.

SPECIALIZED MENTAL HEALTH CARE, TEACHING AND RESEARCH CARE
St. Joseph’s Health Care London has a range of inpatient and outpatient specialized programs for adolescents and adults of all ages. In addition to the new Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care which is a provincial resource, specialty inpatient services for Elgin and the Southwest are now located in London. Outpatient and outreach services for Elgin residents include:
- Elgin Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT)
- Steele St. Treatment and Rehabilitation Residence
- Adult Ambulatory Services

Teaching – affiliated with Western, Fanshawe College and approximately 70 education institutions, St. Joseph’s provides a range of student learning opportunities – for more information, call 519 646-6100 ext. 42393

Research – Lawson Health Research Institute is the research arm of London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph’s Health Care London – to learn more about mental health research visit www.lawsonresearch.com

REDUCING THE STIGMA
An anti-stigma campaign has been established by St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) in conjunction with a number of community partners to challenge the stigma often associated with mental illness, fight fear and promote a culture of respect. For more information contact STEGH at 519 631-2030

For more information on mental health services provided by St. Joseph’s Health Care London, call 519-637-0511 or visit www.sjhclondon.on.ca/mentalhealth

St. Joseph’s Health Care Foundation gathers, grows and grants philanthropic funds to enable St. Joseph’s Health Care London to pursue excellence in care, teaching and research. To learn more about how you can support programs and projects that enhance the delivery of care in our community, please visit www.sjhcfoundation.org