
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

Expanding emergency counselling services in Lower Mainland hospitals

VANCOUVER – Youth and young adults in the Lower Mainland will benefit now and in the future as Dan’s Legacy Foundation expands its free mental health and substance use outreach at Surrey Memorial, Royal Columbian, Burnaby General and BC Children’s hospitals.

The expansion, supported by a \$1.35-million grant from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, will allow Dan’s Legacy to double its counselling and outreach team to 10 therapists, two social workers and two youth outreach workers.

“Young British Columbians who need mental health and substance use care deserve quick access to quality, specialized supports,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “The emergency counselling services that Dan’s Legacy provides is vital to youth at one of their greatest times of need, and I’m grateful to the foundation for enhancing this service to support more British Columbians during the pandemic, and after.”

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation’s counsellors have seen a substantial increase in hospitalizations for anxiety, psychosis, overdose and suicide attempts among their youth clients. The foundation has also fielded 50% more referrals from other agencies to its trauma-informed counselling and wraparound programs.

“There is a very short window of opportunity when a youth in crisis is asking for help,” said Barbara Coates, executive director, Dan’s Legacy. “In the past two years, our pilot program has shown that when we can get in front of a youth immediately and connect them to our counselling program and wraparound support, the successful outcomes for young people in terms of increased stability and positive mental health doubles. We’re grateful for the support of the ministry and pleased to see the government putting more resources toward harm prevention.”

The foundation’s counselling services are available for people 15 to 25 years of age who have experienced trauma and mental health or substance challenges, and their families. These issues can manifest as depression, anxiety, sleep and eating disorders, self-harming behaviours or through self-medication with alcohol and other drugs.

If you or someone you know needs help, contact Tom Littlewood, program director, Dan’s Legacy, at tom@danslegacy.com or 604 999-9136.

Quick Facts:

- Since 2018 the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions has provided Dan’s Legacy with just over \$2 million.
- Dan’s Legacy provides trauma-informed and culturally sensitive counselling and

wraparound programming to youth affected by mental health and addictions challenges.

- Dan's Legacy's team goes directly to the youth wherever they are. There is no wait list and the services are free.
- In the past four years, Dan's Legacy has helped over 900 youth meet their educational, employment and recovery goals.

Learn More:

A Pathway to Hope: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCMentalHealthRoadmap_2019.pdf

Stop Overdose BC: <https://www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca/>

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