



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New walk-in counselling option for youth opening March 19, no referral required

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Monday, March 4, 2019—Access to youth counselling in our community will improve on March 19, 2019, with the expansion of an existing adult walk-in service to also serve individuals between the ages of 7 and 16.

The result of an innovative collaboration between **Northumberland Hills Hospital's Community Mental Health Service, Rebound Child and Youth Services** and **Northumberland Community Counselling Centre**, the new youth walk-in counselling option will be accessed through a centralized intake location at Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health offices at 1011 Elgin Street West, Suite 200, Cobourg.

Based on a model similar to the adult walk-in clinic introduced by Northumberland Hills Hospital and Northumberland Community Counselling Centre in the fall of 2017, the youth walk-in clinic will be available two days a week, beginning Tuesday, March 19th. Hours of operation will be as follows:

- Tuesdays (8 AM to 4 PM) and
- Thursdays (10 AM – 6 PM).

Youth and their family members seeking the walk-in option will not require a referral. Seen on a first-come, first-served basis, walk-in clients will meet first with a community mental health staff member who will assess them for appropriateness for walk-in support. Once confirmed, clients will receive a same day individual counselling appointment with a counselor from Northumberland Hills Hospital, Rebound Child and Youth Services or Northumberland Community Counselling Services. In the event that crisis and/or in-patient hospital support is found to be required, or if additional referrals are needed, this will be coordinated.

There is no limit to the number of times local youth and their families may access the new walk-in counselling clinic. Northumberland Hills Hospital's Community Mental Health Services team will continue to offer long-term counselling and group support, and previously established services will also continue unchanged at Northumberland Community Counselling Services and Rebound Child and Youth Services.

In a February 2018 presentation to the Hospital's Board of Directors on her team's services, Jennifer Cox, the hospital's Integrated Community Mental Health Director, confirmed that after a year and a half in operation, the goals of the walk-in option for adults have been exceeded.

"Wait times for care have decreased, and client access to treatment has increased as a result of the adult walk-in counselling option," Cox confirmed. "We have seen a significant uptake in the option for return counselling visits, and walk-in visitors have risen from 96 visits/month in April 2018, to 173 visits/month in November, 2018."

Area agencies have also observed a rise in the number of youth requiring mental health support.

The total number of youth physically presenting to the Northumberland Hills Hospital Emergency Department for mental health reasons has increased year over since 2014/15, from 2% to 3.04% of overall Emergency Department visits for individuals 17 and under.

Northumberland Hills Hospital's mental health crisis visits involving youth have increased significantly in the same period from 16% of total mental health crisis visits in 2014/15 to 26% in 2018/19.

Rebound Children and Youth Services reached out to Northumberland Hills Hospital in December 2018 to explore a possible collaboration to better address youth needs.

An opportunity to leverage the successful adult walk-in model emerged and the new three-way collaboration between Northumberland Hills Hospital's Community Mental Health Services, Rebound and Northumberland Community Counselling Centre has now been formalized.

"By working together with our community partners in this way, we are able to add real-time, counselling support in Northumberland," said Carol Beauchamp, Executive Director, Rebound Child and Youth Services. "The needs have increased steadily in recent years, and wait lists for youth mental health supports have grown. Our aim with this new walk-in option is to address the challenges affecting area youth and their families, so that they can receive support in a timely and accessible fashion."

Janet Irvine, Executive Director of Northumberland Community Counselling Centre, anticipates a second benefit with the walk-in approach. "For our adult clients, the walk-in model has reduced the bias often associated with mental illness. Our Centre has found that youth and families who may be reluctant to approach their doctors with mental health concerns find self-referral more comfortable; the walk-in setting provides comfort plus an immediate response. Timeliness is everything. The earlier we offer assistance, the more unlikely situations will be to escalate."

"I would like to offer my congratulations to Northumberland Hills Hospital's Community Mental Health Service, Rebound Child and Youth Services and Northumberland Community Counselling Centre, for their innovative and collaborative new youth walk-in counselling program," stated David Piccini, MPP Northumberland-Peterborough South. "The government is making mental health a priority where every Ontarian is fully supported in their journey towards mental wellness. We applaud the initiative of these health care organizations to better address the needs of our local youth by increasing access to services on a timely basis."

Information on the new walk-in counselling clinic for youth will be found online at: mentalhealthwalkinclinic.ca and on the websites of Northumberland Hills Hospital, Rebound Child and Youth Services and Northumberland Community Counselling Centre.

Quick facts:

- The new youth walk-in counselling clinic will open Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 1011 Elgin St. West, Suite 200, Cobourg
- No physician referral is required.
- Area youth between the ages of 7-16 will be seen Tuesdays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Thursdays from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on a first-come, first served basis; youth older than 16 will continue to have access to the adult walk-in option.
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada](http://mentalhealthcommission.ca) reports that mental health problems and illnesses affect more people in Canada than some of the major physical disorders; 1 in 5

experience a mental health problem or illness in any given year, and 70 per cent% say symptoms started in childhood

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About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

About Rebound Child & Youth Services Northumberland – Rebound Child & Youth Services Northumberland is a not-for-profit charitable organization that provides mental health support, literacy and learning help, parenting support programs, and youth justice diversion services. Programs are available for children and youth between the ages of 4 and 23. These programs offer support for young people and their families with preventative, early intervention, bridging support services, group programming, and one-to-one services. Since 1997, Rebound has taken a collaborative approach to servicing the community and continues to partner with multiple organizations in order to provide the best possible programs and supports to the young people of Northumberland and their families. With the support of over 70 volunteers, Rebound responds to the changing needs of the community with a commitment to providing excellent services that build on a person's unique strengths and abilities. For more information, please visit www.rcys.ca or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ReboundNorthumberland, or on Instagram [@ReboundCYS](https://www.instagram.com/ReboundCYS) and Twitter [@ReboundCYS](https://twitter.com/ReboundCYS)

About Northumberland Community Counselling Centre (NCCC) – The Northumberland Community Counselling Centre is a **Family Service Ontario** non-profit agency that delivers a range of services addressing mental health needs across Northumberland County, with offices in Cobourg and Campbellford, and outreach in other communities. The NCCC provides brief and longer-term psychotherapeutic counselling for a broad spectrum of mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. Specializing in trauma treatment for men, women, and children, it provides extensive therapy/counselling for family violence, children who witness domestic violence, child abuse, and male and female sexual assault victims. The NCCC is also the regional provider of adult court-diversion programs (Partner Abuse Response - PAR) for men and women. The NCCC is a dynamic, involved community partner offering information/education, psychotherapeutic counselling, support, advocacy, and preventative programs and services to clients, families, workplaces, and communities. For more information, please visit www.northumberlandccc.com or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NorthumberlandCCC.

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