



Addiction & Mental Health Services | services de lutte contre les dépendances et de santé mentale
Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington

News Release

For Immediate Release

May 7, 2019

AMHS-KFLA is Enhancing Addictions and Mental Health Care

AMHS-KFLA is your local leader in mental health and addictions services and is strengthening our programs to support clients we care for and respond to a growing demand for care across our communities.

While changes are occurring now for the future, we want to make sure clients, their families, our care partners and the public are getting accurate information and the information they need.

Why We're Changing

For some time, AMHS-KFLA has not kept pace with advancements in addictions and mental health care and offered a broad range of services that are more appropriately provided by other community partners.

Previously, AMHS-KFLA was unable to be responsive to the needs of a growing number of people experiencing mental health and addictions challenges, many who have been waiting several years for the right kind of care.

The need for transformation began with an investigation, initiated by the South East Local Health Integration Network (South East LHIN) and subsequent Investigator's Report which was made public in September (2018). The report clearly indicated that the agency had drifted from its mission and was no longer delivering on its mandate. Moreover, that it was necessary to refocus and realign the financial, clinical, leadership and governance efforts of the agency to serve the people of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington who need addiction and mental health care.

AMHS-KFLA's New Leadership

Karen Berti was identified as the South East LHIN-appointed Supervisor and given a mandate to address issues with a priority focus on enhancing care and service delivery to clients. Karen brings with her extensive knowledge and experience in advancing innovative and evidence-informed community care services in Ontario, and is a trusted leader stewarding the transformation underway.

AMHS-KFLA's transition is focused and time-limited. As appropriate, new leadership will be identified to sustain the organization and its reputation as a trusted mental health and addictions agency over time.

Planned Enhancements to Levels of Client Care

Broad and extensive consultations have and continue to occur as transformation plans are implemented over the next six months. We are shifting to offer evidence-informed models of care that have been proven to be most effective in promoting improved client outcomes and the recovery journey for clients we serve. These changes will increase our core program capacity, enhance our clinical models of care and support access to clinical care for those who have been waiting (sometimes for years) for access to us.

The following is a list of some of the client-centered improvements aimed at enhancing levels of care, client engagement, and reducing, if not eliminating historical service wait lists:

- Specialized rehabilitation within a unique housing model of care for clients needing wrap-around services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (underway).
- A new centralized intake and booking process to make it easy for clients and caregivers to change appointments (coming soon).
- The relocation of all downtown Kingston services to 552 Princess Street (completed).
- Extended hours of operation for some services to provide greater access and reduce wait lists (coming soon).
- The hiring of regulated health care professionals, the introduction of a new peer navigator role and greater access to psychiatry (underway).
- Increasing services tailored specifically to youth (coming soon).
- Offering outreach services in the community and rapid re-entry to services when required (coming soon).
- Increased access to service for people who live in rural areas (recruitment underway).
- Expanded counselling and therapy services (recruitment underway).
- Launch of a Client and Family Advisory Committee (planning stage).

Changes to Our Care Teams

As we change our care programs and services to better meet the needs of approximately 8,000 clients we serve, staff changes needed to occur. While we have some exceptional staff, our clinical care models needed to evolve to include a greater number of regulated roles. As a result, changes impacted union (OPSEU Local 489) non-union and management roles which no longer supported our refocused programs and services.

Through all transformation steps, AMHS-KFLA has operated in accordance with our collective agreement and met with OPSEU Local 489 representatives several times to confirm various organizational changes related to unionized staff and we continue to maintain open lines of communication with union representatives.

We are creating inter-professional teams that can address all aspects of a client's needs and recovery, and ensure our staff have access to resources they need. At this time, we have begun hiring in effort to recruit over 50 positions, of which 45 are projected to be unionized roles. We are adding more regulated health professionals (such as Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and Psychiatrists), expanding teams with addictions counselling and therapy providers, and will be introducing a new Peer Navigator role which will bring individuals with lived experience to our staff team.

Changes to How Programs are Offered

As we refocus and enhance addictions and mental health services, we will continue to work with partners, clients, families and staff to look at ways to support access to community programs and services that are not appropriate to continue to be offered by us.

In no way do the changes being implemented leave any tenant homeless. In fact, for clients that need wrap-around care (24 hours a day/7 days a week), we are supporting their transition from a group home setting to a newly renovated, customized building at 35 Lyons Street.

AMHS-KFLA is excited about the renovations taking place at 35 Lyons street which will soon be accessible to clients we serve that need specialized rehabilitative support. Clients and their families are preparing for the move and have been engaged in personalizing their space through the selection of household items such as bedding and towels.

As shared with referring partners, AMHS-KFLA is winding down the vocational rehabilitation program. Changes are being implemented in a phased approach with the overall program concluding June 28, 2019.

At this time AMHS-KFLA is no longer accepting community referrals for vocational rehabilitation and will continue to work with partners to look at ways to support access to services through other community resources.

AMHS-KFLA values the role of vocational rehabilitation in supporting the recovery journey of those we serve, and it will remain a critical part to many of our existing programs. On a go forward, our approach to offering vocational rehabilitation services to our clients will look different as it becomes integrated into the role of our Case Managers as part of a wholistic approach to client care.

We are expanding counselling and treatment services from a program of four staff to six across our communities to create access to this service in **Sharbot Lake, Verona, and Kingston**. We will soon be offering goal-directed, time-limited sessions known to be effective in promoting improved client outcomes and a client's recovery journey. This change will also allow for timely and seamless access to this service across all of our communities.

We believe changes in our models of care and the new mix of skills in our workforce will better support clients, their families and the community as we will be able to provide better care, more access to services and support, and lead well in this community when it comes to addictions and mental health.

Ongoing updates on changes are accessible through our website www.amhs-kfla.ca, and at any time, should clients, their family members or care partners have questions about changes underway, please speak with the member of our care team they are connected to or reach us directly by:

Calling the Main Office: 613-544-1356 Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Leaving a Message with the Communication Team: 613-544-9210

Sending an Email to: info@amhs-kfla.ca

Quote:

“The changes we make today will ensure clients and families have improved access to an integrated system of care – one that relies on proven evidence-informed practices and advancements to support the journey to recovery,” said Karen Berti, Supervisor for AMHS-KFLA.

For More Information:

AMHS-KFLA
Communications Department
Media@amhs-kfla.ca
613-532-2348

24 Hour Crisis Line

Kingston & Frontenac: 613-544-4229

Lennox & Addington: 613-354-7388

AMHS-KFLA provides responsive, confidential, non-judgmental, community-based addiction and mental health services to nearly 8,000 individuals in Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington. Our vision is a community where people have wellness, acceptance and a sense of belonging.