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Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre launches “Live and Learn”

A new video, launched today at a media conference, aims to increase awareness of mental health services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC). “Live and Learn” is a 10 minute long overview of the TBRHSC’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit, which provides assessment and treatment of mental health disorders for Northwestern Ontario youth.

“Live and Learn” is now available via healthcare professionals throughout the region, providing access to potential regional patients and their families who would otherwise have limited access to comprehensive information about available services.

Nancy Persichino, Director of Maternal Child Services at TBRHSC says the intent of the video is to provide information about the program to youth who live in the remote north, often in fly-in communities. “With this information, families are better informed and therefore more inclined to access the program and begin treatment for serious mental health disorders,” she explains.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit of the TBRHSC is a voluntary program and accepts referrals from physicians and community agencies. The availability of “Live and Learn” enhances the ability to provide orientation to the program to regional patients. “Through the video, families are able to view the facilities, meet the professionals involved in the program, and develop clear expectations of treatment without leaving their own communities,” says Lori Marshall, Senior Vice President – Patient Care Services at TBRHSC.

The locally-produced video was made possible through funding from the United Way. \$10,000 was donated by the organization to help address child and adolescent suicide on Northwestern Ontario communities. Gloria Cyr, Communications Director with the United Way, is pleased that the video is now available to potential clients. “At the United Way Mental Health Services for youth is a recognized need,” she says. “It is wonderful that this video will bring knowledge of available services to so many vulnerable young people in our region.”

The \$10,000 lead donation from the United Way prompted additional community support of the Health Sciences Centre’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit. Bearskin Airlines contributed \$40,000 to the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation to help fund the purchase of video conference equipment for the Unit. The equipment, featured in the “Live and Learn” video, strengthens the linkages between the Health Sciences Centre, regional service providers and between patients and their families.

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“As a business rooted in Northwestern Ontario, Bearskin Airlines is committed to investing in the communities we serve and the people who live there,” says Cliff Friesen, Executive Vice President of the airline. “This video conferencing equipment addresses the challenges of distance and separation, ultimately increasing access to and use of a vital service for the children and youth of Northwestern Ontario Communities.”

Glenn Craig, President and CEO of the Health Sciences Foundation applauded the United Way and Bearskin Airlines for their recognition and support of the need to improve access to mental health services for the people of Northwestern Ontario. “These contributions are a clear demonstration that community partnerships and Donor generosity combine to improve healthcare for the people of Northwestern Ontario,” he says. “The children in the region are now able to look forward to a brighter future because of improved access to services at our Health Sciences Centre.”

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