



## Ontario Improving Access to Mental Health and Addiction Services in Sault Ste. Marie

Province has Approved the Building of a Modern, Community-Based Facility

April 25, 2022

SAULT STE. MARIE - The Ontario government has approved the proposal for the relocation of the Residential Withdrawal Management program from its current location within Sault Area Hospital to a modern, dedicated site that better meets the needs of individuals and families in Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding region.

"I am so proud to bring this message of hope to the people of our community who are suffering and to their families. This significant investment of nearly \$20 million is the result of years of hard work by Sault Area Hospital staff and countless community stakeholders." Said Ross Romano, MPP for Sault Ste. Marie. "This new in-patient site will complement the significant investments our government has already made to build out-of-hospital services and numerous community wrap-around supports and services that aim to prevent trauma to a vulnerable person in crisis, before they end up in hospital. These supports are all critical to help people heal and thrive."

"Supporting the relocation of Sault Area Hospital's Residential Withdrawal Management Program is another way our government is building a stronger, more resilient health care system for all Ontarians," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "This investment will ensure that families in Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding communities have access to key services and the supports they need on their journey to mental wellness."

"Now more than ever, it is important that individuals and families in Sault Ste. Marie can access the safe and effective mental health and addictions services they deserve - when and where they need them," said Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. "Today's investment is just one more way our government is ensuring all Ontarians have access to the high-quality mental health and addictions care that meet their unique needs and have opportunities for treatment and recovery."

The Ministry of Health is providing additional capital grant funding of over \$18 million in FY22-23 and approval to award the construction contract for Sault Area Hospital's (SAH) Residential Withdrawal Management Services: Leasehold Improvement Project.

- In March 2017, the Ministry of Health provided SAH with up to \$1,079,000 to support planning for the project. Bringing the total funding provided by the ministry to date to over \$19 million.

Approval of the implementation grant will enable SAH to begin construction of the Project in May 2022 and complete construction in December 2022. It will support SAH in delivering withdrawal management services in the most appropriate setting.

"This is an essential investment by the Ontario Government for our community and those we serve. We know that expanding and improving access to addiction services is crucial to supporting our patients, families, and community. Our ability to offer improved services, more beds and enhanced treatment space will support patients in their recovery. We look forward to continuing to work with all partners to support mental health and addiction care in our community."

- Ila Watson, President & CEO, Sault Area Hospital

The scope of the project involves renovations of over 16,000 square feet in a new leased community space located at 145 Old Garden River Road in Sault Ste. Marie. The renovations would fit out the space for SAH's full capacity of 20 adult withdrawal management beds and meet contemporary standards for accessibility, privacy, and infection prevention and control. In 2020 the Residential Withdrawal Management Centre was moved to Sault Area Hospital as a temporary measure following a fire and a flood at the original site. The relocated Centre continued to address the community's growing need for mental health and addiction supports. The relocation of the withdrawal management program back into the community from the temporary location in the Hospital will improve access to withdrawal management services in Sault Ste. Marie and help to address the community's growing need for mental health and addiction supports.

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