

Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Brand New Royal Ottawa Hospital Approved – Eastern Ontario Applauds Attention to Mental Health.

OTTAWA- The first teaching hospital in Canada to be privately built and operated was announced today by the Government of Ontario. The Royal Ottawa Hospital, a century-old psychiatric teaching hospital of the University of Ottawa, will soon be replaced by a new state-of-the-art facility – all designed, constructed and owned by a private sector partner.

Approval for the new psychiatric hospital, estimated at \$95 million , was approved after a two-years of discussion with government on new programs and funding formulas to meet the new mandate of the hospital and its desperate need for new facilities. Although the new facility will be privately developed and owned, the funding of core activity for the hospital - the delivery of mental health services - will remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, the hospital Board and Administration.

“A new facility will transform the Royal Ottawa Hospital into a dynamic mental health centre, with new incentive to attract the best and brightest clinicians and researchers in the world,” said George Langill, CEO of the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group. “This new centre will promote assurance and healing instead of shame and secrecy.”

With approval now in place, the Royal Ottawa Hospital will issue a call for proposals from the private sector in January, with construction to start with the selected partner in April. There will be minimal patient and staff disruption while construction is underway because the new facility will rise up in front of the existing buildings on Carling Avenue. The new facility is expected to be ready for occupancy in May 2004.

“Building a new facility will save the Ministry of Health \$4 million annually in operating expenses over a renovation option,” said Mr. Langill. “More importantly for our patients and families, we will be able to focus our efforts on what we do best. Our strength, our knowledge and our future lies in the provision of state-of-the-art mental health care -- not in facility development and management.”

The new 284-bed facility will feature spacious rooms with natural light, a “street” that links all the in-patient units and natural gardens and courtyards. As part of the important affiliation with the University of Ottawa, a new research tower will also be built to house research and education

activity and the Institute of Mental Health Research. Modern facilities will provide in-patients and out-patients, for the first time at the Royal Ottawa Hospital, with new and progressive opportunities for rehabilitation and swifter recovery from mental illness.

“We applaud the Government of Ontario for embracing our proposed funding formula,” said Jeffrey Dale, Chair of the Hospital Board of Trustees. “We see this as a pilot project with enormous potential, not only for the people of Eastern Ontario, but for the entire country. This approach has the potential to reform the process of restructuring , not only in health care but in many other areas of the public sector.”

The announcement was made by Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty and Health Minister Tony Clement. Joining them was also Minister of Community and Social Services, John Baird, and mental health advocate Alana Kainz, who has worked with community leaders to raise awareness of the desperate but dismissed needs of people with mental illness. Flanked by politicians and hospital officials were supportive members of the community of Eastern Ontario, many of whom were overjoyed at the news and attention to the mental health agenda.

“We proposed this funding formula with the confidence gained by our current relationship with Brookfield Lepage Johnson Controls who manages with great efficiency and effectiveness, many of our non-health care related services today,” said Mr. Langill. “The employees of this company are already providing exemplary service and leadership for our organization.”

The Royal Ottawa Hospital has award-winning experience in private-public partnerships with its existing five-year relationship with Brookfield Lepage Johnson Controls, a private sector company who currently manages its non-health care related services. The strength of this highly successful relationship helped fuel the approval of the new funding formula for its new facility.

“The need for new facilities at the Royal Ottawa Hospital was a mission embraced by all members of our community,” said Alana Kainz. “I can’t help but think that more people in need of help will want to seek treatment in a comforting and healing environment rather than one that perpetuates stigma and discrimination. This is an historic day for the people of Eastern Ontario.”

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