

## \$6.5 million announced to create 12 new mental health beds at Southlake

A \$6.5 million investment from the Province will create 12 new beds in an expanded adult inpatient mental health unit at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

The plan was announced last Wednesday at Southlake by Health Minister ? and Newmarket-Aurora MPP ? Christine Elliott.

?Investing in projects like the expansion of Southlake Regional Health Centre's Adult Inpatient Mental Health Unit is just one way our government is continuing to deliver on its commitment to build a connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system for all Ontarians,? said Minister Elliott. ?This investment will ensure patients and families in Newmarket, Aurora and the surrounding communities will have access to high quality care in a safe and modern unit, supporting them in their journey to mental wellness.?

The infusion of cash, and the resulting 12 beds, will bring the unit's capacity to 28 beds.

According to Southlake Regional Health Centre, an average of 17 patients come into the Emergency Department every day experiencing a mental health crisis.

The inpatient program provides short-term assessment and stabilization for people 18+ with severe and acute mental health disorders.

The expansion will allow Southlake to care for more than 400 additional patients each year, they say.

?In the year prior to the onset of the pandemic, our emergency department saw over 3,000 mental health visits,? said Arden Krystal, President & CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre, at last week's announcement. ?Our adult inpatient unit had over 1,100 admissions and our mental health clinics saw more than 3,300 outpatient visits. These numbers are expected to keep increasing in the months and years [ahead] to come as a result of population growth and the longer-term implications of the pandemic.

?The space will have private rooms, more windows with natural light and common areas to support recovery and group therapy. Southlake's Mental Health Patient & Family Advisory Committee provided critical input into the design phase which is so important to ensure we build spaces that are truly family- and patient-centred. Better spaces lead to better healing, better experiences and better outcomes. At Southlake, we like to say we're by your side. This is especially true in our mental health program. I would like to thank the Province for their support. We look forward to getting to work on construction of the new space.?

Southlake's Adult Inpatient Unit is expected to be completed in late 2022.

**By Brock Weir**EditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter