

## CREATING A PATHWAY THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS

*Medavie Health Foundation funds three-year campus mental health initiative  
led by Dr. Stan Kutcher*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**November 24, 2016**

**Halifax, NS** – Postsecondary students will have access to improved mental health literacy and on-campus mental health care with *Pathway through Mental Health Care for Postsecondary Settings*. Led by Dr. Stan Kutcher, a renowned expert in adolescent mental health, the three-year initiative is supported by over \$600,000 in funding from Medavie Health Foundation.

*Pathway through Mental Health Care for Postsecondary Settings* will build on proven youth mental health components to create, evaluate and disseminate a comprehensive and effective campus mental health framework. The framework, which will be field tested at postsecondary campuses in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, could serve as a model across Canada and internationally. Participating institutions include Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Mary's University, St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia Community College, and Holland College.

*Pathway through Mental Health Care for Postsecondary Settings* was launched this morning at Saint Mary's University with partner, postsecondary and student representatives in attendance.

Since late 2011, the Foundation has committed almost \$7.5 million to over 50 single and multi-year grant and partnership programs, some of which have yet to be announced.

### **Quick Facts**

- Approaches to campus mental health in Canada are fragmented; many lack evidence of effectiveness and are often focused on mental health awareness/promotion rather than improving mental health literacy and access to care.

Smaller institutions may face additional challenges in developing and implementing effective evidence-based interventions.

- Most mental disorders (about 70%) can be diagnosed before age 25, with postsecondary education populations at highest risk for the onset of these illnesses. The most common high-volume, low-intensity mental disorders of this group include depression, anxiety disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. This is also a period of risk for substance misuse and addiction.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 34 after accidents. In 2012, suicide accounted for 28% of deaths among youth aged 15 to 19, and 25% among young adults aged 20 to 24.

### Quotes

“This new initiative is aimed at ensuring students receive the right support at the right time, from building resiliency to manage their everyday mental health on campus to providing access to care for those with a mental illness. This aligns with the way we think about health care at Medavie and an example of a different kind of care – one that begins on campus in helping young people stay in school and live their best lives.”

– *Bernard Lord, CEO, Medavie*

“Mental health-related interventions on many campuses are often driven by enthusiasm and hope. Some of them may work, some may not and some may have unintended consequences. We wish to build on this energy of change and hope for better futures, and underpin it with evidence for what works so we can have comfort that what is being done is achieving the outcomes needed. This project will help us in that quest.”

– *Dr. Stan Kutcher, Project Lead, Pathways through Mental Health Care for Postsecondary Settings*

“Student mental health is a priority for the region’s campuses. With partners like Medavie Health Foundation and Dr. Stan Kutcher, we’ve been advancing the development of regional collaborative opportunities. Today’s announcement is further confirmation of our strong commitment to student mental health.”

– *Peter Halpin, Executive Director, Association of Atlantic Universities*

“Holland College is extremely excited about taking part in the Pathway project. We know from experiences over the past couple of years that more and more of our students are dealing with mental health issues. We feel there is a great deal we can

learn from other postsecondary institutions involved in this project and want to use this knowledge to ensure that our instructors and staff provide the broadest and deepest support we can for all of our students. We look forward to working together with our partners to ensure a better future for our staff and students.”

– *Sandy MacDonald, Vice President & Chief Learning Officer, Holland College*

“Postsecondary students across Nova Scotia are currently facing tremendous barriers to mental health literacy and care. While often frustrated by this, students are active in trying to make their campuses more accessible and safe for those living with mental illness. Students Nova Scotia believes *Pathway through Mental Health Care for Postsecondary Settings* addresses the solutions that campuses need to begin helping students.”

– *Sophie Helpard, Executive Director, Students Nova Scotia*

### **Associated Links**

[Transitions](#)

[Teen Mental Health.org](#)

[\\*Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addictions, Facts and Statistics](#)

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### **About Medavie Health Foundation**

Medavie Health Foundation is funded by [Medavie Blue Cross](#) and [Medavie EMS](#) as part of a long-term commitment to make a lasting impact in the communities where our employees and customers live and work. The Foundation is focused on two core causes of particular concern to Canadians – child and youth mental health and type 2 diabetes. It aims to bring organizations and communities together through collaborative multi-year partnerships and to support grassroots, community-based initiatives through an annual grants program. For more information and to sign up for our e-newsletter, visit us at [medaviehealthfoundation.ca](http://medaviehealthfoundation.ca).

Medavie is proud to commit an annual social dividend of 10 per cent of our net income to the Medavie Health Foundation.

### **For more information**

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