



Addiction & Mental Health Services | services de lutte contre les dépendances et de santé mentale
Kingston Frontenac Lennox & Addington

Memo/Note

Date June 12, 2020
To Partners
From AMHS-KFLA Leadership
Subject Changes to AMHS-KFLA Role with the Kingston Self-Isolation Centre (KSIC)

Through the successful transformation of AMHS-KFLA, the Agency has been leading community addictions and mental health service delivery design in the sector and collaboration opportunities with cross-sector partners to support critical system access and flow across Kingston, Frontenac Lennox and Addington (KFL&A).

In acknowledgement of the strength of the AMHS-KFLA care team, and in recognition of the diligence the Agency took implementing responsive and appropriate COVID-19 precautionary measures, the City of Kingston invited the Agency to take the lead in opening and operating the Kingston Self-Isolation Centre (KSIC or the Centre) to support individuals experiencing homelessness.

AMHS-KFLA's enhanced interdisciplinary team capacity and focus on providing services to people with serious mental illness and addictions issues, has ensured that anyone admitted to the Centre received important mental health and addiction supports on-site, including access to a physician and case management support.

The KSIC was designed through a robust planning approach. A broad cross-section of partners collaborated in the development of operational procedures, informed by existing guidelines in use by other isolation centres in the province. Great diligence was taken to establish and integrate security and infection prevention protocols into operations and retrofit building infrastructure to effectively provide safe accommodations.

The Centre successfully opened on Monday March 30th, after a week of planning, which was a direct result of the dedication and generosity of many community partners (Kingston Health Science Centre, KFL&A Public Health, Street Health - Kingston Community Health Centres, Kingston Fire and Rescue Services, Kingston Police, United Way KFL&A, Providence Care and Frontenac Paramedics).

In such a challenging time for our health system, it was realized early in operating the Centre that it was an effective emergency department (ED) diversion strategy by providing safe and appropriate supports for individuals that would not otherwise have access to a temporary space to self-isolate or be quarantined.

Original COVID-19 planning and preparations looked to ensure the Centre could safely accommodate up to 33 individuals during a self-isolation or quarantine period. While the needs of some of our most vulnerable have been effectively supported over the past two months, the Center's full capacity has not needed to be utilized.

As part of due diligence by the City of Kingston, which provides funding to operate the Centre, a review of the need to extend the lease past May was conducted. On May 25th, the City communicated that the Centre would relocate closer to the downtown core and operate at a smaller scale to reduce unnecessary facility costs while continuing to support community needs.

The AMHS-KFLA care team successfully facilitated the move of the Centre on June 1st to the City's recently acquired Lower Union building. An operational budget for the Centre (4-bed capacity) was submitted on June 2nd to the City and on Thursday June 4th the Agency was informed that while the Centre was an important resource to the public and our leadership was valued, funding would not be approved. To give the City time to identify their next steps and develop a communication plan, it has been agreed that AMHS-KFLA will continue to operate the Centre until June 30th, 2020.

The purpose of this memo is to ensure you are aware of the forecasted change in the Agency's role in operating the KSIC as a result of the funding decision by the City. We are committed to exploring future opportunities to support the City's efforts and have established a very strong relationship with their Housing and Social Services Team.

Our Management Team continues to work diligently to support the well-being of staff, clients and our broader community while ensuring continuity of client care during these challenging times. As you may be aware, since opening the KSIC we have proactively expanded outreach into the community. On May 5th, the Agency launched staff Outreach Teams in partnership with Home Base Housing to connect directly with vulnerable residents in the Kingston community, and facilitate referrals to service and the KSIC, as appropriate.

Outreach Teams consist of a paired AMHS-KFLA staff member and a Home Base Housing Street Outreach Worker. Core roles include attending known sites where people experiencing homelessness may be (e.g., the Kingston downtown area, Street Health, etc.); engaging community stakeholders and building relationships; creating linkages to services (awareness and education); providing generic supplies (e.g., food, tents), and facilitating access to COVID-19 screening and testing, as applicable.

AMHS-KFLA recently hired a Registered Nurse (RN) to enhance the Outreach Team's support to individuals also experiencing physical health issues. This model has been very successful in connecting complex unwell residents to primary care supports and medical assessments are now being done where individuals are at in the community.

It has been our team's privilege to step up and support the Kingston community by operating the Centre. The Agency maintains an unwavering focus on supporting the well-being of some of our most vulnerable, and it will continue to provide support to individuals experiencing homelessness through our Outreach Teams.

Should you have questions specific to Outreach Teams, please contact Julie Lambert at jlambert@amhs-kfla.ca or 613-328-0678. If you have questions related to KSIC changes, contact Mitchell Grange, Acting Manager, Housing and Early Years Program with the City of Kingston at mgrange@cityofkingston.ca or 613-546-2695 ext. 4996.