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MEDIA RELEASE

NE LHIN Applauds Campaign Inviting Talk about Mental Illness to Reduce Stigma

Bell Let's Talk Day is February 8



February 7, 2012 – Talking about mental health might help people seek help.

That's why the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN) applauds the motivation of the Bell **Let's Talk** Day on **February 8**, 2012 which invites Canadians to talk about mental illness in order to combat the stigma that keeps too many people from seeking help.

For every text message sent and every long distance call made February 8 by Bell and Bell Aliant customers, Bell will donate 5 cents to programs dedicated to mental health (regular long distance and text charges apply). Last year's Bell Let's Talk Day raised more than \$3- million in new funding.

The Canadian Institute of Health Research says that one in five Canadians will experience a form of mental illness at some point in their lives. The Mental Health Commission of Canada says that two in three people suffer in silence fearing judgment and rejection.

"I believe all the efforts to raise awareness around mental health help," said Marion Quigley, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association - Sudbury/ Manitoulin. "We're getting increased referrals for services. Mental illness is a medical issue just like diabetes and heart disease – you need to seek treatment and support."

The NE LHIN's support to expand the CMHA's toll-free "warm" telephone line and the work taking place in Algoma –to integrate 13 mental health and addiction agencies and more than 100 services– are examples of how the LHIN is helping fellow Northerners get the care they need as close to home as possible.

"The North East LHIN works with providers in communities across the North East Ontario to ensure increased access to services for people needing mental health or addiction care," Louise Paquette, North East LHIN CEO, explained.

In addition, the North East LHIN has been coordinating planning with our local partners across the North East and various provincial ministries to implement the province's ten year comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy -- "Open Minds. Healthy Minds."

Quick Facts:

- Each year, the NE LHIN allocates approximately \$70 million to 48 local providers who provide front-line community mental health and addictions services.
- At some time in their lives, about 20% of Ontarians – one in every five people – will experience a serious mental illness or harmful substance use, and 5% will have a serious problem with gambling.
- Between 15% and 21% of children and youth in Ontario have at least one mental health issue; and 10% to 25% of seniors experience mental health disorders.
- The CMHA "warm-line" number to call is 1-866-856-9276.

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For more information, please contact Cynthia Stables, NE LHIN Director, Communications and Community Engagement, cynthia.stables@lhins.on.ca or (705) 845-1887.

About the North East Local Health Integration Network (North East LHIN)

As a health-focused organization, the North East LHIN is helping both fellow Northerners and health care providers improve local access to health care. The North East LHIN makes decisions about regional health care integration, funding and planning. It oversees \$1.4-billion in local health care investments on behalf of the 555,000 residents of Northeastern Ontario. To find out more, visit nelhin.on.ca or call 1-866-906-5446.