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## Government Responds to Mental Health Panel Recommendations

### Health and Wellness

March 20, 2017 9:34 AM

Government will work to enhance and better coordinate mental health supports offered to children and youth, through school facilities like youth health centres.

This is one of four recommendations put forward by the Minister's Advisory Panel on Innovation in Mental Health and Addictions. The province will implement all four recommendations.

"We know the need for mental health and addictions support is growing across the province and we need to find new ways to reach those who need help," said Health and Wellness Minister Leo Glavine. "I thank the panel for its work. We will now work with schools, mental health professionals, Nova Scotia Hospital Authority and the IWK Health Centre, to address these recommendations."

In June 2016, a panel of eight experts was appointed to examine Nova Scotia's current approaches to mental health and addictions.

As part of its work, the panel looked at early intervention, improving community support, and innovative practices in mental health and addictions from other jurisdictions that could be applied in Nova Scotia.

"It is gratifying to see such an immediate and strongly supportive response to the recommendations that our committee has presented," said Dr. Stan Kutcher, panel co-chair. "I am personally and professionally hopeful that as these directions are implemented, the province will continue firmly on its path towards improving the mental health and access to quality mental health and addictions care for all Nova Scotians."

"I am confident these recommendations will have a positive impact on Nova Scotians," said Starr Dobson, panel co-chair. "We are committed to reflecting the mental health needs of all Nova Scotians and are already moving forward on putting more innovation to work in our province."

The province will also provide an additional \$4.4-million as a permanent investment in SchoolsPlus by 2019-20. This will support all schools in the province and add about 51 new mental health clinicians, SchoolsPlus facilitators and community outreach workers.

The four recommendations include:

- create a single web and mobile-based platform and 24/7 live answer, toll-free phone line to provide consistent access to mental health and addictions information, support and services province-wide. Ensure access to live counselling for youth
- ensure developmentally appropriate, evidence-based, consistent mental health and addictions curriculum at the primary to six level, as well as for students in grades nine and grade twelve
- develop a standard model for mental health/health-care delivery by integrating the supports and services offered by youth health centres, Schools Plus and Early Development Centres. The services provided must be evidence and needs-based, client-focused and youth-friendly, providing a full scope of needed supports and interventions
- all mental health service providers must receive evidence-based suicide risk assessment and suicide risk management training.

A copy of the recommendations and government's response is available at [novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/Minister\\_s\\_Advisory\\_Panel\\_on\\_Innovation\\_in\\_Mental\\_Health\\_and\\_Addictions.pdf](http://novascotia.ca/dhw/publications/Minister_s_Advisory_Panel_on_Innovation_in_Mental_Health_and_Addictions.pdf).

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Government will enhance and better coordinate mental health supports for children and youth through school facilities.

This is one of four recommendations from an expert panel that the province has committed to implement.

Health and Wellness Minister Leo Glavine says the need for mental health and addictions support is growing across the province and there is a need to find new ways to reach those who need help.

The province will also invest four-point-four-million dollars by 2019-20 in SchoolsPlus to add 51 new mental health clinicians, SchoolsPlus facilitators and community outreach workers.

The Departments of Health and Early Childhood and Education, Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK Health Centre, will work together to implement the recommendations.

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