

New protocol to improve mental health transfer of patients

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Peel Regional Police has launched a new protocol to improve and impact the delivery services of care through partner organizations and law enforcement.

On Oct 20, the Peel Region Police Hospital Transfer Protocol was introduced to increase the organized steps and overall experience for mental health patients when transferring to hospital workers by the police. The protocol assists and takes a weight off the shoulders of hospital and paramedic staff.

The protocol is also looking to reduce wait times in the Emergency Department through faster transfers.

“Through the Peel Police-Hospital Transfer Protocol, people experiencing a mental health and/or addictions-related crisis who are accompanied to our Emergency Departments by police are triaged and assessed as soon as possible, and are assigned a risk category which determines when the accompanying police officer is able to transfer the patient to our care,” said Donna Harris, Manager, Public Relations and Digital Media at William Osler Health System.

Peel Regional Police partnered with William Osler Health System, alongside Peel Regional Paramedic Services, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Peel-Dufferin Branch and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Caledon Detachment.

The protocol provides and outlines each step to be taken by each partner when individuals are taken to Osler's by police, which is represented under the Mental Health Act.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, “The Mental Health Act sets out the powers and obligations of psychiatric facilities in Ontario. It governs the admission process, the different categories of patient admission, as well as directives around assessment, care and treatment.”

The protocol's aim is to not only be able to give patients the necessary care quicker and more efficiently, but to allow police to get back on the road and into the community quicker.

“This new Protocol is a positive step in reducing the role of police in providing a health care response and improves the experience of people needing mental health support. It complements the work of our Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team program, which has led to a decrease in police apprehension rates from 70 per cent to 24 per cent when a crisis worker is present,” said David Smith, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Peel Dufferin in a news release. “We are very proud to be involved in this partnership to improve mental health care.”

Caledon OPP Mike Garant, Inspector and Interim Detachment Commander stated that in addition to the improve transfer of mental health patients, the protocol will also help the negative view of police involvement when assisting individuals with mental health and addiction.

“The Caledon OPP is pleased to be a part of this Peel Police Hospital Transfer Protocol. I believe this partnership will reduce some of the stigma attached with a police apprehension of persons experiencing mental health and addictions crisis,” said Mike Garant, Inspector and Interim Detachment Commander, Caledon Ontario Provincial Police. “This collaboration focuses on the efficient access to care and treatment to all affected persons.”

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