

**Alberta Hospital Edmonton  
Community Mental Health Implementation Committee**

c/o Mr. Don Sieben  
Peterson Walker  
#804, 10235 – 101 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3G1

January 11, 2010

Mr. Ken Hughes, Chair  
Alberta Health Services Board  
10101 Southport Road SW  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2W 3N2

Dear Mr. Hughes,

On behalf of the Alberta Hospital Edmonton Community Mental Health Implementation Committee, we are pleased to inform you that the committee recommends and supports in principle the relocation of the Alberta Hospital Edmonton (AHE) geriatric psychiatry program to Villa Caritas. As part of this move, the committee strongly recommends and supports the development of a campus concept that will serve as the 'hub', leveraging the existing strengths of the geriatric mental health program across all aspects of health and social services. Grounded in the principle of putting the patient first, our decision has been based on the information that has been provided to us as part of our work.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, Honorable Ed Stelmach, Premier, directed the establishment of an implementation team to provide oversight with respect to changes proposed for Alberta Hospital Edmonton (AHE). The committee was tasked with the following:

- Review and, if required, provide recommendations to guide the transition of the following services currently performed at AHE; movement of mental health patients from AHE to community-based care, relocation of some acute general psychiatry beds to existing psychiatric units in general hospitals and any other changes currently under consideration;
- Consult directly with physicians, other clinical staff, AHE employees, community stakeholders and patients and their families to address concerns and questions that arise as the process unfolds and make recommendations on how to resolve issues; and
- Review proposed plans to ensure that community-based mental health resources necessary to support any patient affected by the planned changes are in place before implementation proceeds.

The committee has met extensively since its initial meeting on October 13, 2009 (Appendix A). Over the past months the committee has gained a broader understanding of the infrastructure challenges faced by Alberta Health Services (AHS) on the AHE site and the proposed program changes. Shortly after its inception, the committee conducted an open forum to provide an opportunity for input from physicians and staff of AHE. These discussions assisted in refining the direction of our work. Additionally, forum input resulted in a decision that the clinical heads of each program will meet with the committee as their respective programs are reviewed. Aligning with the review of the geriatric program, Dr. Mike Buchinski, Clinical Director Geriatric Psychiatry at AHE, has been a guest at committee meetings since November 13<sup>th</sup>.

The committee has received and reviewed detailed briefings from AHS, medical staff at AHE and other sources outlining alternative care models for mental health service delivery. As part of the detailed geriatric review further consultations were held with a broad group of community stakeholders, including the families of patients, who would be affected by the proposed changes. The viability of several options for the AHE geriatric programs was considered with the Covenant Health, Villa Caritas site holding the most promise.

Committee members are committed to being part of meaningful transformation of the mental health system, where the patient comes first. The committee recognizes that the Villa Caritas site provides a tremendous opportunity to create a Seniors' Mental Health campus (Appendix B). Potential exists to go beyond simple co-location of services on one physical campus and move toward collaboration on a continuum of specialty geriatric psychiatry and geriatric medicine services. It would also be the committees' recommendation that any developments of this nature receive an adequate and ongoing evaluation.

After careful review the committee supports in principle the proposal to move the geriatric psychiatry program from AHE to Villa Caritas, subject to the following:

**1) The provision of care at Villa Caritas for all patients within the AHE geriatric inpatient psychiatry program with no reduction in program capacity.**

**2) Resolution of all significant concerns through the full implementation of all mitigating strategies identified in the December 29<sup>th</sup> report (Appendix C).** Dr. Mike Buchinski and Mr. Patrick Dumelie, President and CEO of Covenant Health, were asked by the committee to review the significant concerns considered to be critical to the success of the Villa Caritas proposal. They have categorized these concerns into three groupings: patient safety, staff safety and operational effectiveness. The committee is aware that Dr. Buchinski, Mr. Dumelie and various members of their teams have worked collaboratively to agree upon acceptable mitigating strategies for all concerns identified. Continued support of the move of geriatric patients from AHE to Villa Caritas is contingent upon the successful resolution of all identified concerns.

**3) Provision of regular updates on progress in implementation of mitigating strategies.** AHS/AHE together with Covenant Health will provide regular reporting to the committee outlining progress in the implementation of mitigating strategies.

**4) Provision of space that is in addition to the current design, for patients to walk and receive informal recreation.**

The committee wishes to make it very clear that the recommended direction for the geriatric psychiatry program in no way precludes future determinations regarding the rest of the programs at the AHE site.

We are thankful for the assistance given to the committee by AHE staff, public and nonprofit organizations and others who have assisted us to this point. We would especially like to acknowledge and commend the excellence in care provided by the staff and physicians in the geriatric program at AHE. We heard resounding praise for their services from all stakeholders with whom we engaged.

Should you require any additional assistance or information in this matter, please don't hesitate to contact either one of us.

With Sincere Regards,

/s

Dennis Anderson  
Co-Chair

/s

Don Sieben  
Co-Chair

Enclosures

CC Hon. Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta  
Hon. Ron Leipter, Minister of Health & Wellness  
Dr. Stephen Duckett, President & CEO, Alberta Health Services  
Mr. Fred Horne, MLA, Edmonton-Rutherford