



## London Health Sciences Foundation

### Bell “Let’s Talk” helps remove mental health barrier

October 10, 2014

*Bell Community Affairs Regional Director Lena Demarco (left) presents a \$25,000 grant to London Health Sciences Centre’s Mental Health Care Program, Ambulatory Care Manager, Jennifer Van Houwelingen (centre) and London Health Sciences Foundation President John MacFarlane.*

**London, Ont.** – London Health Sciences Foundation received a \$25,000 grant from the Bell “Let’s Talk” Community Fund, supporting London Health Sciences Centre’s Mental Health Patient Assistance Program.

“Since 2011, the Bell Let’s Talk Community Fund has invested more than \$4 million to support groups working to fight stigma and improve access to mental health care in communities throughout Canada,” says Mary Deacon, Chair of Bell Let’s Talk. “We are very pleased to be announcing our grant to London Health Sciences Centre’s Mental Health Patient Assistance Program on World Mental Health Day. London Health Sciences Centre is one of almost 60 new organizations we’re so proud to support in 2014 as they provide much-needed help to people living with mental illness and the family and friends who care for them.”



The Mental Health Care Program at LHSC offers a wide range of care including treatment for patients who have experienced trauma, early onset of anxiety, depression or psychosis and for individuals with combined mental and physical health challenges. Providing consistent care for patients, while alleviating obstacles that may hinder a patient’s attendance at treatment, is part of the plan for increasing access to mental health care. Some patients forgo treatment when faced with financial hardship – even one as simple as the cost of getting to the place of treatment.

The Mental Health Patient Assistance Program is an initiative created to ensure patients struggling with both mental health and financial hardship receive optimal support while receiving care at LHSC. Administered by social workers within the hospital’s Mental Health Care Program, this fund helps patients in emergency, short-term situations when other funding from personal insurance or government sources is not available. The program can cover items like transportation to treatments, hospital meals, over-the-counter medication related to their mental health care and even basic necessities like toiletries, etc. The grant is a big boost to the program and will cover a full half of the estimated need this year.

“We would like to thank Bell Let’s Talk for their continuing efforts to help remove the stigma once associated with mental illness, which was a hurdle for many seeking care,” says Jennifer Van Houwelingen, Manager Ambulatory Care, Mental Health Care Program, LHSC. “This wonderful grant from Bell Let’s Talk will help remove another barrier for patients accessing mental health services at our hospital.”