



East Metro Youth Services Expands Youth Walk-in Clinic to Saturday Service

'what's up' walk-in® Clinic targets immediate community-based mental health care support for children, youth and families in the GTA

TORONTO (February 3, 2015) – East Metro Youth Services' (EMYS) *'what's up'* walk-in® Clinic is expanding by opening Saturdays, making it Toronto's first children's and youth mental health centre to offer free weekend counselling beginning February 7, 2015. The new Saturday service will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The *'what's up'* walk-in® Clinic expansion meets a crucial need as youth and parents unable to access the clinic through the week can now have their and their children's mental health issues - depression, anxiety, self-harm, bullying or family issues - addressed on Saturday.

"We know that youth and families in crisis doesn't end at 5 p.m. on a Friday," says David O'Brien, Clinical Services Supervisor, East Metro Youth Services. "Since opening in 2011, the most common feedback we received from the public about our clinic was disappointment that it wasn't open on the weekend. And it was a valid complaint. In the 21st century, the traditional 9 to 5 workweek has become a relic. Parents are working more shift work, and less traditional hours; they may not have time or energy to make late afternoon or evening appointments. We're pleased to be offering this new pathway for mental health support for families and youth."

EMYS opened the *'what's up'* walk-in® Clinic to respond to an acute need for immediate, barrier-free mental health and addictions counselling in our community. The average wait time for service at EMYS' walk-in clinic is 20 minutes.

"We offer a new and unique way to make counselling accessible, when and where our clients need it, and without a long-wait or the need for an appointment, or other barriers that too often pose obstacles for youth," adds O'Brien.

Since opening, the *'what's up'* walk-in® Clinic has seen year-over-year increases in the total number of visits. In 2014, there were 1402 visits by children, youth, young adults and parents to *'what's up'* and the numbers of individuals served jumps when factoring in families. The most prevalent problems addressed in 2014 were depression, anxiety and family conflict.

And while the *'what's up'* walk-in® Clinic often meets the needs of children and young people from Scarborough, over half of those counselled in 2014 came from Toronto, East York, North York and the GTA. That wide catchment underlines how everyone in Toronto needs quick access to mental health services.

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“Based on our statistics, we know neighbourhoods in East York and Thorncliffe Park are in vital need for similar services. Our goal, along with our community partners, is to expand walk-in mental health support system for children, youth and families in these in these communities,” says O’Brien.

EMYS’ *‘what’s up’* walk-in® Clinic is located at 1200 Markham Road, Suite 200. It is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday: 2 p.m. – 8 p.m., Tuesday: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Friday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

About East Metro Youth Services

East Metro Youth Services (EMYS) is an accredited adolescent mental health and addiction centre. EMYS has been serving young people and their families in East Toronto since 1974. We are committed to doing whatever it takes to meet the needs of the clients, participants, families and communities we serve. www.emys.on.ca

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