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New website helps navigate the child and youth mental health care landscape in Kootenay-Boundary

KOOTENAY-BOUNDARY – The new KB Searchlight website www.kootenayfamilyplace.org/kbsearchlight for the Kootenay Boundary (KB) region is the first local web resource to link all child and youth mental health care services in one place. Opening with a welcoming illustrated map of the region, site visitors can click to find the most appropriate local services, resources and apps for a range of problems, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harming, substance use and more.

“Timely action is often an important part of dealing with mental health issues,” said Dr. Cindy Loukras, Specialist Physician Lead. “This website will quickly direct people searching for help to the most appropriate resources in their home communities. It’s a resource for both the public and health care providers.”

GP Lead, Dr. Lilli Kerby agrees stating “As a family physician this resource will definitely be of value as I work with my patients to refer them to the most appropriate local support services.”

The creation of the KB Searchlight website is part of a large Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use (CYMHSU) collaborative funded by the BC government and Doctors of BC. The program started last year with the goal of providing timely access to integrated mental health and substance use services and supports throughout the province to children, youth and their families. Interior Health is the first region to partner with the collaborative.

The website was created by the CYMHSU Kootenay Boundary Action Team, one of eight local action teams working at the community level in the Collaborative. The KB Action Team brings together a wide array of local stakeholders, including families, doctors, mental health counsellors, community agencies and more.

Tyler Exner, a youth representative on the KB Action Team who as a teenager faced his own serious mental health issues, including hearing voices, urges youth and families to use the family-friendly website. “I want to tell kids that it’s okay to talk about what’s going on with them. I made it harder for myself, by not talking up sooner when I began to have problems,” said Exner, 22, who is now recovered and studying to work in the field of youth mental health. Exner is eager to share his story and experiences to help other youth and families.

The KB Searchlight website aims to help facilitate more timely and appropriate care for children and youth with mental health concerns.

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BACKGROUND

Communities served by the new website include Nelson, Salmo, Kalso, Slocan Valley, Castlegar, Trail, Rossland, Grand Forks, and Midway. Services are listed community by community to help families locate the help they need, and include detailed information on agency contacts and hours, program type, specific services, wait times, and referral protocols. Community agencies, physicians' offices, schools and library websites in Kootenay Boundary will be linked to the site.

About the Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative (CYMHSU)

The [CYMHSU Collaborative](#) involves multiple individuals, organizations and ministries all working together to increase the number of children, youth, and their families receiving timely access to mental health services and support in the Interior Health region.

The Collaborative is funded by the [Shared Care Committee](#), with additional support from the [Specialist Services Committee](#). Both committees are partnerships between and funded by the Ministry of Health and the Doctors of BC.
<http://sharedcarebc.ca/initiatives/cymhsu-collaborative>

About the Divisions of Family Practice

The [Divisions of Family Practice](#) initiative is funded by a joint committee of the BC Ministry of Health and Doctors of BC. As of April, 2014, there are 34 Divisions of Family Practice in B.C. encompassing 129 communities. Divisions work with partners at the grassroots to develop local solutions to health care challenges.

For more information:

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