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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Free one-stop service will help parents navigate mental health, substance use disorder resources Disorders affect more than 3,100 Prince George area kids

Prince George families with children and youth with mental health or substance use disorders have a new option for getting the help they need thanks to the Kelty Resource Centre -- a free, one-stop virtual resource centre that will link them to appropriate information and services tailored to their individual needs.

"I am pleased to officially announce the availability of this innovative new service. The Kelty Resource Centre is designed to help families at all stages of addressing mental health and addiction issues, whether they are just beginning to seek help or are already involved in services," said Children and Family Development Minister Tom Christensen.

Dr. Rachel Boulding, a Prince George-based child and youth psychiatrist, believes the Kelty Resource Centre is good news for local families affected by mental health and substance use disorder issues.

"I think a service such as the Kelty Resource Centre will be very helpful because it can be an accessible place to start. The biggest challenges facing children and families dealing with mental health and substance use disorders can be trying to decide if they need help and what kind of help they need. Many parents don't know if what they are experiencing is normal or not," said Dr. Boulding.

"The Kelty Resource Centre may help fill the gap for Prince George families who don't know what is available or where to start. The centre's availability by e-mail and phone, and its one-stop shopping approach to providing access to critical mental health and substance use disorder information, programs and services, will be great," she added.

Family members simply contact the Kelty Resource Centre by phone, or email, or they can visit it at BC Children's Hospital when in Vancouver. Centre staff will ask questions, help identify the family member's needs, and outline possible options such as providing direction to community intake resources through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and other services, useful websites, brochures, books, videos and other information.

The Kelty Resource Centre may be accessed in the following ways:

Phone: 604.875.2084 or 1-800-665-1822

Email: kellycentre@bcmhs.bc.ca

Web: www.bcmhas.ca/KeltyResourceCentre

In person: Mental Health Building (Please use Entrance 2, intersection is Heather and 30th), BC Children's Hospital, Room P3-302, 3rd Floor – 4500 Oak Street, Vancouver

Hours of operation are currently: Tuesday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

According to a 2002 research study conducted by Simon Fraser University for MCFD, approximately 15 per cent or 140,000 BC children and youth are affected by mental health

disorders which cause both significant symptoms and impairment. Anxiety, conduct, attention and depressive disorders are the most common.

Substance use disorders affect approximately 0.8 per cent or 7,500 BC children and youth. Substance use disorders in children and youth are associated with many detrimental consequences including risky sexual behavior, increased risk for suicide, accidental deaths, and diseases such as HIV and hepatitis.

The Kelty Resource Centre is funded with the generous support of the Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation in partnership with BC Mental Health & Addiction Services (BCMHAS), an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, and BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

"The benefits of this health promotion initiative will include opportunities for prevention, early detection and intervention of mental health and addiction issues, increased understanding of the signs and symptoms, and greater awareness of the availability of help and where to find it," said Peter Coleridge, VP education and population health, BCMHAS.

"The Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation aims to help remove the stigma and ignorance associated with mental disease through education, treatment and research," said Ginny Dennehy.

The Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation was established in 2001 by Whistler residents Kerry and Ginny Dennehy after their 17-year-old son, Kelty, took his own life after battling depression. The mission of the foundation is to raise awareness of the magnitude of depression and the effect it has on young people and our society, and to remove the stigma associated with depression by taking a leadership role in education, effective treatments, and the research effort.

Potential future services available through the Kelty Resource Centre now under review for possible delivery include:

- Community-based child/youth mental health and addiction screening days
- Evidence-based, child- and youth-friendly information translated into different languages
- Development of inventory of treatment services available in BC for mental health and addiction issues.

The Kelty Resource Centre is part of an integrated provincial strategy to improve health literacy in mental health and addictions in BC. The strategy was developed by BCMHAS in consultation with regional health authorities, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information, and other non-governmental organizations.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Programs at BC Children's Hospital are managed and administered by BC Mental Health & Addiction Services (BCMHAS), an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

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