



Southlake Launches Fundraising Campaign to Expand Crucial Mental Health Facilities

Demand exceeds capacity, necessitating the immediate expansion of mental health treatment areas

Newmarket, ON – October 1, 2020 -- Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation (Southlake Foundation) is launching a \$7.5 million [Mental Health Campaign](#) to support surging demand for treatment that will be addressed with a newly built Emergent Mental Health Assessment Centre and a new 12-bed Adult Inpatient Unit, along with other site improvements.

Fundraising campaigns are typically launched prior to the creation of new facilities but, when it comes to mental health in the communities we serve, the demand was exceeding existing capacity. Southlake's mental health spaces are smaller than today's standards, overcrowded and without basic necessities that promote healing and recovery. The exceptional mental health care at Southlake requires an urgent investment to create specialized assessment facilities, greater inpatient capacity and enhanced privacy.

"Having lived through the struggles our son had with mental illness, I know all too well that many individuals are at risk of falling through the cracks, sometimes with tragic consequences," said Ansar Ahmed, the Vice Chair of Southlake's Board of Directors. "Those struggling with mental illness often suffer in silence with a sense of isolation. This new space and expansions are welcome additions to Southlake's Mental Health Program where patients can feel supported and cared for in a specialized setting. The need for expanded facilities for mental health patients is urgent."

The \$7.5 million fundraising goal will fund the creation of new mental health facilities including:

Emergent Mental Health Assessment Unit (EMHAU) – The recently opened EMHAU has six private assessment rooms with beds, windows and televisions where patients can see a psychiatrist and begin treatment immediately until inpatient beds are available. Before the launch of the EMHAU, a mental health patient could spend up to five days in the Emergency Department in a windowless area, with only a curtain for privacy waiting for admission and for their treatment to begin. Having a dedicated assessment unit available dramatically expedites care, treatment and, ultimately, healing. This unit was designed with input from patients and their families, as well as staff on the amenities that would be most helpful and healing for patients experiencing a mental health crisis.

New Adult Inpatient Unit – A new 12-bed Adult Inpatient Unit scheduled to open in summer 2022 will boost Southlake's total inpatient mental health capacity from 24 beds to 36, and incorporate new indoor and outdoor common spaces for social interaction, recreation and treatment. This expansion reflects a more modern approach to care and includes many more private rooms, creating a better overall patient experience throughout the healing process.

"Hospital leadership recognized the urgency and acted to expand our facilities in a remarkably short time. It takes a great deal of support from many different levels to create new units but this expansion is the result of comprehensive collaboration to conceive, develop and build something entirely new for Southlake's mental health patients," said Sarah Banbury, Director of Mental Health at Southlake. "This space will make a difference to patients and help them start their journey to recovery."

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Southlake is at the heart of the mental health crisis with Ontario's fourth-busiest Emergency Department in a region that has one of the country's fastest growing and rapidly aging populations. This is leading to surging demand for mental health services. There are also 17 group homes located in the Southlake area, eight within walking distance of the hospital.

The pandemic's impact on mental health has accelerated the already surging demand for mental health program capacity at Southlake and underscores the need for these enhanced resources.

While government will provide some support for the new 12-bed Adult Inpatient Unit, the Southlake Foundation relies on community support to expand the Mental Health Program. Members of the surrounding communities have mobilized to make the hospital a regional and provincial leader with past examples including the Margaret Bahen Hospice for York Region, the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre and the acquisition of a second MRI. Donations to Southlake's Mental Health Campaign can be made [online](#) or by contacting the Southlake Foundation [directly](#) at 905-836-7333.

About Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation

Since the inception of Southlake Foundation in 1980, more than \$160 million dollars has been raised in support of Southlake Regional Health Centre. Working with members of the community, hundreds of volunteers, the Southlake Family and our incredible donors, Southlake Foundation will continue to support life-saving medical equipment, infrastructure upgrades and expansions, patient programs and staff education, all for the goal of providing leading edge care for patients and families, close to home. For more information visit: www.southlakefoundation.ca or call 905-836-7333.

About Southlake Regional Health Centre

Southlake Regional Health Centre is a full-service hospital with a regional, clinically advanced focus. We provide our communities with care right from birth to end of life and in addition, we provide top-notch services such as cardiac and cancer care across York Region and Simcoe-Muskoka. We do this through innovative partnerships and amazing people. With a team of more than 3,700 employees, 650 physicians and more than 900 volunteers, Southlake is committed to creating an environment where the best experiences happen.