



Ari Zaretsky, MD, FRCPC
Psychiatrist-in-Chief
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Associate Professor, University of Toronto
2075 Bayview Avenue, FG-24
Toronto, ON M4N 3M5
Ph: 416-480-5031; Fax: 416-480-5070
ari.zaretsky@sunnybrook.ca

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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to show my strong support for Stella's Place, Canada's first integrated assessment and clinical treatment centre for young adults with mental health needs.

As Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, I have followed with great interest, the efforts by Ms. Donna Green to establish Stella's Place. At Sunnybrook, we have the largest Youth Psychiatry Division in Ontario, with 11 Youth Psychiatrists providing care to youth aged 14-24. This transitional age group is a particularly vulnerable aged group due to the fact that severe mental illness often emerges at this age but unfortunately mental health services for this group are often inadequate and there are major problems with continuity of service care when youth enter young adulthood.

There are thousands of young adults in Ontario who are suffering from mental health disorders, and far too often they fall through the cracks of an overcrowded and poorly coordinated system. Although there are many excellent mental-health clinics and support groups serving adults with mood and other disorders, young adults are being overlooked.

The way health funding in Ontario is structured, a newly diagnosed 16-year-old will be treated through the adult system. But, a teenager's experience of a mental-health disorder is very different from that of an adult. They will often feel out of place, alienated and abandon the attempt to heal.

When it opens, Stella's Place will provide comprehensive assessment and treatment services at no cost to young adults between the ages of 16 and 30 with complex mental-health needs. It will not duplicate existing services, but rather help people navigate through the services available in Ontario while offering crucial missing pieces. These will include:

- Comprehensive, integrated assessment and clinical treatment services;
- A flexible menu and help in designing a program that feels right to each individual;
- Access to clinical staff (psychiatry, psychology, social work, nursing, nutrition);
- A suite of clinically proven individual and group therapies, creative arts, fitness, health, wellness and life management strategies, vocational and educational support and planning;

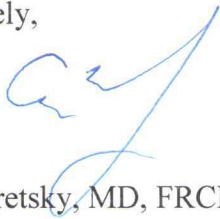
- Peer mentorship; and
- Transition coaches to help them navigate through their recovery process and make connections in the community.

The Stella's Place model aligns with Premier Kathleen Wynne's commitment to move forward with the next stage, the adult stage, of Open Minds Healthy Minds, Ontario's comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. It is a perfect example of a private-public partnership as government continues to look for new ways of delivering health care to Ontarians. Additionally, it can potentially relieve stress on Community and Provincial Social Services and specifically target the ongoing problem of young adults who otherwise fall through the cracks.

Young adults should not be defined by their mental illness. Through prevention, comprehensive assessment, traditional and non-traditional therapies and a focus on lifestyle management, Stella's Place will offer the support and tools they need to help them regain and manage their lives.

For more information on this incredible project, please visit www.stellasplace.ca or contact Donna Green at dgreen@stellasplace.ca.

Sincerely,



Ari Zaretsky, MD, FRCPC
Psychiatrist-in-Chief
Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry
University of Toronto