
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Foundry BC

New mental-health, addiction services for youth in Vernon

VERNON – Young people in Vernon and surrounding areas will have access to much-needed integrated health and wellness services, including mental health and addiction supports at a new Foundry centre.

Foundry Vernon will offer young people ages 12-24 and their families safe, welcoming and youth-designed health and wellness services, including mental-health and addiction support, drop-in counselling, physical and sexual health care, youth and family peer support and social services.

“Every young person in British Columbia deserves health-care services that meet their unique needs, including access to primary care and mental-health support, no matter where they live,” said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “A new Foundry Centre in Vernon will be a beacon for young people providing a safe and judgment-free space to find mental health, wellness and addiction supports close to home.”

Children and youth have faced unprecedented challenges over the past few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, toxic drug crisis and climate-related emergencies. That’s why the Province is investing \$74.9 million through Budget 2023 to open 12 more Foundry centres in B.C., for a total of 35 Foundry centres throughout the province. Vernon and Powell River are the first two communities that have been selected for a new centre. The process to select the remaining communities will launch in September and applications will be due by November 2023.

“It brings me enormous joy to see the strides Foundry is continuing to make in realizing its vision of making safe and accessible wellness spaces a living reality for young people in every part of the province, including rural and remote communities,” said Toni Carlton, Foundry’s provincial director for Community, Culture and Connection. “The opening of a Foundry centre in Vernon is a momentous occasion worthy of celebration for the community of Vernon and is a step in the right direction towards prioritizing the health and wellness needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our society.”

Foundry Vernon will be operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association Vernon and District Branch. There are 16 Foundry centres open throughout the province, in Vancouver-Granville, North Shore (North Vancouver), Campbell River, Ridge Meadows, Abbotsford, Kelowna, Prince George, Victoria, Penticton, Terrace, Comox Valley, Langley, Richmond, Cariboo-Chilcotin (Williams Lake), Sea to Sky (Squamish) and Port Hardy.

An additional seven Foundry centres are in development in Burns Lake, East Kootenay (Cranbrook), Surrey, Fort St. John, Tri-Cities, Kamloops and Sunshine Coast. In addition, Foundry’s virtual services can be accessed from anywhere in the province through the Foundry

BC app, by phone or: foundrybc.ca/virtual

"It's necessary for young people to access mental health and wellness services where and when they need them," said Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development. "With this new Foundry centre coming to Vernon, youth and families will now have a one-stop service nearby that they can count on, enabling them to meet their goals because of these essential supports."

The Province will be providing annual funding for operations and services at Foundry Vernon, as well as one-time funding of \$1.5 million to establish the centre.

Enhancing supports for youth living with mental health and addiction challenges is an integral part of A Pathway to Hope, B.C.'s roadmap for building a comprehensive system of mental health and addictions care that British Columbians deserve.

Quotes:

Harwinder Sandhu, MLA for Vernon-Monashee -

"Young people have faced such uncertainty over the past few years with the COVID-19 pandemic, toxic-drug crisis, extreme weather emergencies and other circumstances. I look forward to celebrating the opening of Foundry Vernon, where more young people will have access to the mental health and addiction supports, they need. As a parent and healthcare professional, I see the great benefits and much needed services this foundry centre will bring for years to come."

Julia Payson, executive director, Canadian Mental Health Association, Vernon and District Branch –

"Mental health starts with community, and the vision for Foundry Vernon is based on young people, families, service providers and advocates all coming together to envision how we can best support youth across the North Okanagan. As we build and launch Foundry Vernon, our community will continue to support young people and their loved ones, to make sure this is an inclusive and safe space, and that youth are met 'where they are at.' "

Bailey Milan Brule, Vernon youth advisor, Youth Advisory Committee, Foundry Vernon –

"We are thrilled that our community has a new resource for youth and their families. Having wellness services and educational resources that are accessible immediately upon entering a centre, is the difference between a young person falling through the cracks or saving their lives. We are beyond grateful that Foundry Vernon will serve as a refuge and safe space for those who need it most in North Okanagan."

Learn More:

Learn about A Pathway to Hope, government's vision for mental-health and addictions care in B.C.: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021MMHA0049-001787>

Foundry: <https://foundrybc.ca/>

Contact:

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Communications
250 880-7117

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