



# North BEAT COLLABORATIVE

SUPPORTED BY ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP  
& ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION



## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **\$882,500 Youth Opportunities Fund Grant Helps Northwestern Ontario Youth Get Care And Services For Psychosis When And Where They Need It**

**Thunder Bay, ON** — On Friday morning, local MPP Bill Mauro and Ontario Trillium Foundation volunteer Lesley Bell met with representatives from NorthBEAT and St. Joseph's Care Group to formally congratulate them on the \$882,500 Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) grant that they received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation earlier this year. The event was to launch the NorthBEAT Collaborative to assist young people experiencing psychosis.

"I am pleased that the funding announced today is being used to take a collaborative, and comprehensive, approach to the early identification of psychosis, and referral to appropriate supports. It's absolutely critical that our youth get the supports they require at the right time and place and that family members, friends and service providers from a variety of sectors are all working together for the best outcomes. I want to congratulate NorthBEAT and all of the partners involved in this innovative project to assist youth in our community who are living with psychosis." – Bill Mauro, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan

Funds from the four-year long grant will support a collaborative initiative to improve the system of care, detect psychosis symptoms early on, and enable youth living in Northwestern Ontario to access appropriate services. The project is designed to improve connections between sectors, redesign existing resources and build the capacity of service providers.

"The NorthBEAT Collaborative initiative is a wonderful opportunity to make the necessary enhancements to support for some of our most vulnerable community members, our youth. This is not only an important investment in improving access to services and mental health care for youth and their families, but is also an investment in the future of our youth so that they can lead more engaged and fulfilling lives." – Michael Gravelle, MPP for Thunder Bay-Superior North.

The term "psychosis" describes conditions that affect the mind, causing a loss of contact with reality or trouble deciding what's real and what's not. Psychosis can be treated. Early detection and specialized support helps optimize recovery and helps youth live meaningful lives. YOF is an annual program that provides grants and capacity building supports to youth-led grassroots groups and collaboratives serving young people who face multiple barriers to economic and social wellbeing. NorthBEAT received funding from the Strategic Collaborations Stream that supports collaboratives working to improve systems of services and opportunities for marginalized youth.

"Youth from Northwestern Ontario who experience psychosis – a serious, mental health symptom – often do not get the help they need. With an \$882,500 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Youth Opportunities Fund, the NorthBEAT Collaborative members will work together to make it easier for youth with psychosis to get the care they need, where and when they need it," said project lead Dr. Chi Cheng (Child and Adolescent, Adult Psychiatrist) at the project's launch.



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Previous research conducted by the NorthBEAT team shows that young people who experience psychosis in Northwestern Ontario do not get the services they need, for a number of reasons including:

- Youth, their families and service providers do not know about available services
- The signs of psychosis are not recognized
- Service providers are not sure how to intervene
- The vast geography of the region means that people often live far from services that could help. Services also face challenges such as high turnover of staff
- Unique social and economic factors including: stigma of mental illness, trauma and loss, communities in crisis, culturally insensitive models of care, systemic racism, and poverty.

The four-year funding will give the NorthBEAT Collaborative an opportunity to work with youth and their family members, as well as service providers to improve the system of care and support for youth with psychosis. The NorthBEAT Collaborative has quickly grown to include providers from across the region in the sectors of education, health, mental health, Indigenous health, police, emergency, and youth and community service organizations. Together, they will improve care coordination, train those who come in contact with youth to detect psychosis symptoms early, and enhance access to appropriate services for youth with psychosis who live in Northwestern Ontario. [www.northbeat.ca](http://www.northbeat.ca)

“This is one of the largest grants awarded to a research team at Centre for Applied Health Research at St. Joseph’s Care Group and we are excited to be the sponsoring organization of this initiative,” said Myrna Holman, Vice President, People Mission and Values. “The NorthBEAT Collaborative supports both our research and strategic priorities that include delivering high quality services in Addictions and Mental Health. We support the goal of an integrated, youth-friendly system that empowers youth with psychosis to get the services they need by better coordinating existing resources, making it easier for youth to access these resources, and improving access to best practice care.”

An agency of the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is one of Canada’s largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. [www.otf.ca](http://www.otf.ca)

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