



News release

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For immediate release

SIGN welcomes provincial funding for mental health walk-in counselling

The Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbours (SIGN) says funding allocated to Family Service Saskatchewan for mental health walk-in counselling, announced in the provincial budget, is great news.

SIGN, a Yorkton-based social service agency serving east-central Saskatchewan and a member of Family Service Saskatchewan, has been providing the free counselling service two days per week since February, 2018, primarily through its self-generated funding sources.

The province announced that it has allocated \$1.2 million for 11 agencies to provide walk-in counselling in 23 communities across the province. SIGN is expected to receive \$96,000 to support its program.

"That will allow us to expand the service from its current two clinics to five clinics in a week," SIGN executive director Andrew Sedley said following the announcement. "We have found, since we started the service, that there is a huge need for this type of walk-in, unscheduled counselling."

"We look forward to expanding the service, which is greatly needed. We are pleased that the provincial government has recognized this need and has committed to helping fund this program."

SIGN has been providing free walk-in counselling services every Wednesday and Thursday from 12 noon to 7:30 pm at SIGN on Broadway in Yorkton. The service is available to all individuals, couples and families to help address their concerns.

Walk-In counselling is a free, immediate and accessible form of brief counselling. People can drop in for free services without an appointment, similar to the medical walk-in clinics. The services are provided by qualified counsellors, who also help people to connect to the community and health services they may need.

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SIGN has been one five participants in a two-year pilot project conducted by Family Service Saskatchewan to study walk-in counselling. Evaluation of the project shows that when people have access to immediate services, they can begin to feel better in just one session.

A majority of people arriving at walk-in counselling were in distress and needed services immediately, and 71 per cent of participants required only one session with a counsellor. Two-thirds of those seeking counselling indicated they had nowhere else to turn.

Family Service Saskatchewan is a network of 12 family-serving organizations in Saskatchewan, including SIGN. It has collaborated to create a rapid response mental health service in approximately 20 rural and urban communities across Saskatchewan, working in collaboration with Saskatchewan Health Authority.

The services provided are community-based and are located in family service agencies, food banks, public libraries and health centres across Saskatchewan.

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