



Niagara Health System
Systeme De Santé De Niagara

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, July 23, 2014

Community event raises awareness about Hepatitis C

Niagara Health System's Hepatitis C Care Clinic and community partners are hosting a World Hepatitis Day educational event on Monday, July 28 at Market Square in St. Catharines.

The event will raise awareness about hepatitis C, liver health and educate the community about the wide range of services the NHS Hepatitis C Care Clinic and more than 20 community agencies offer to residents.

"The World Hepatitis Day event is a wonderful opportunity to provide education and testing to our community in partnership with the agencies that provide the services," says Brenda Yeandle, Clinical Leader of the NHS Addictions Programs in Port Colborne, which includes the Hepatitis C Care Clinic. "Hepatitis C is something that can seriously impact a person's health. It's not discriminatory. And most importantly, there is a cure."

Hepatitis C is spread when blood carrying the virus gets into the bloodstream of another person. The virus attacks the liver and if left untreated can result in the development of cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. While thousands of Canadians are infected, many are not aware and remain undiagnosed. It is vital to get tested if you think you may have been exposed to hepatitis C.

At the St. Catharines event, Niagara Region Public Health staff will provide private and confidential hepatitis C testing.

"Niagara's rate of hepatitis C is higher than the provincial average," says Irene Loewen, manager in the Sexual Health program at Niagara Region Public Health. "We are pleased to be part of this community event that aims to raise awareness of the disease and the importance of getting tested and treated."

The event runs July 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

About the NHS Hepatitis C Care Clinic

The Hepatitis C Care Clinic is part of the Addiction Services Program of Niagara Health System. The team consists of a physician trained in hepatitis C care and treatment, two registered nurses, a social worker, outreach worker and clinic coordinator. The NHS clinic is located in Port Colborne (260 Sugarloaf Dr.) and we have satellite clinics in Niagara Falls (Greater Niagara General Site) and St. Catharines (4 Adams St.).

The team provides:

- Hepatitis C education.
- Counseling and support – individual / group.
- Hepatitis C – Testing, treatment, and treatment after-care; case management.
- Support for those who may not be suitable for treatment.
- Community outreach.
- Addiction assessment, referral, addiction recovery support and relapse prevention support; case management.

Outreach services:

The outreach worker's services are available to anyone in Niagara; you are not required to be a client of our clinic. Call 905-378-4647, ext. 32552, to contact Don Crocock directly.

More information about the NHS clinic is available at:

www.niagarahealth.on.ca/en/hepatitis-c-care

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