



For Immediate Release

Vital Signs report finds community concerned about the mental health of our children

Sudbury, October 4th, 2011. The rising number of children in the E.R. because of mental health issues and self-harm were among the statistics included in the Greater Sudbury's *Vital Signs* 2011 report, which launched today.

Children and youth were treated 580 times for mental health issues at the Sudbury Regional Hospital (HRSRH) E.R. this past year, representing 3.4% of all children's visits to the HRSRH's ER, according to the report. This proportion was 0.5% higher than the proportion of children treated for mental health reasons at all the hospitals in the North Eastern LHIN and 0.3% higher than all LHINs in Ontario.

Vital Signs also reported that between April 2010 and March 2011, there were 91 cases of children and youth that received care at the HRSRH for self-harm, including self-poisoning, overdose, and self-inflicted wounds. This is up from 82 cases in the previous year.

"As a community, we are concerned about the health of our youth", said Carmen Simmons, Executive Director of the Sudbury Community Foundation, the organization which puts out the annual report, "67% of us are worried about addiction among our young people and 56% think that depression is a serious threat to them," according to the results in the Opinionaire that was completed by Sudburians and part of the *Vital Signs* Report.

Dr. Denis Richard Roy, honorary chair of the *Vital Signs* steering committee and CEO and President of the Sudbury Regional Hospital, responded to the report by speaking about his goal to enhance the level of paediatric research and care at the Hospital.

"I am especially pleased that this year's *Vital Signs* report has an added emphasis on health care, particularly children's health," said Roy, adding that "good health should happen everywhere in the community across all sectors. That is something we need to talk more about in this city".

Cross-sector response to the issues presented in *Vital Signs* is evident as one flips through the colourful pages of the report, which span 10 different issue areas. For instance the statistics concerning youth in our community span the following issues:

Child poverty rate:

The child poverty rate increased in Greater Sudbury between 2008 and 2009, with an estimated 6,240 children living in poverty in 2009.

Affordable housing:

The average cost of a 2 bedroom apartment in Greater Sudbury in 2010 was \$840/mo, up from \$830 in 2009. This is unaffordable to a family with two children and one parent working a minimum wage job.

Accessible childcare:

Greater Sudbury has more subsidized childcare spaces for low income families at 274 per 1,000 children, compared to other municipalities in the province. York had the fewest spaces at 110, and the average in Ontario municipalities was 202.

Environmental legacy:

Sudburians sent less waste per household to the landfill in 2009 (650 kg) compared to 2008 (780 kg), perhaps owing to the increased number of households who have started to compost kitchen waste in their household (73% in 2009, up from just 22% in 2006).

Youth lighting up:

A staggering 21.7% of our youth identified as current daily smokers, way above the provincial (5.1%) and national (6.4%) smoking rates amongst youth.

Neonatal care:

Only 21.9% of births at the Sudbury Regional Hospital were through Caesarean Section, lower than the provincial rate of 28.7%. Since Caesarean Section delivery increases maternal morbidity/mortality and is associated with higher costs, Caesarean section rates are often used to monitor clinical practices with an implicit assumption that lower rates indicate more appropriate, as well as more efficient care.

Youth in the arts:

Greater Sudbury has a thriving theatre scene, growing to 5 active theatre groups in the last two years. One of the recently formed groups is *Youth Entertaining Sudbury*, established in 2010.

“Ultimately, the Sudbury Community Foundation makes this report with the intention of helping people make connections between issues in our community,” says Simmons. “Then we hope it leads them into supporting or making positive changes.”

The Sudbury Community Foundation helps donors plan and realize their philanthropic goals, matching their interests and concerns with community needs and organizations. It also provides grants to organizations and initiatives in Greater Sudbury that help good people do great things in the community.

“SCF was pleased to be able to provide a \$4,500 grant this past spring to Habitat for Humanity to help to address this need for affordable housing in Sudbury,” explained Simmons, adding that the grant was made possible by the vision of the Professional Engineers of Ontario (Sudbury Chapter)

who established a fund at SCF to help support emerging needs in the community now and into the future.

Vital Signs is a national initiative of the Community Foundations of Canada with 22 other community foundations across Canada launching their reports today.

For more information about how to get free copies of the report or about the work of the Sudbury Community Foundation, please contact reception@sudburycf.ca.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Carmen Simmons, Executive Director
Sudbury Community Foundation
705.673.7770
carmen@sudburycf.ca

Heather White, Communications and Project Manager
Sudbury Community Foundation
705.673.7770
heather@sudburycf.ca

Dr. Denis Richard Roy, President and CEO of Sudbury Regional Hospital
Vital Signs Honorary Chair
Hôpital régional de Sudbury Regional Hospital
705-523-7111