

For Immediate Release

Choices for Youth Hosting Federation of Integrated Youth Services Annual Convening in St. John's

Community agencies and government representatives gather to build transformative models of youth mental health and wrap-around supports.

October 26, 2023 (St. John's, NL) – From October 25 – October 26, Choices for Youth and the Federation of Integrated Youth Services are hosting a national convening of Integrated Youth Services (IYS) leaders from across the country. The convening kicked off Wednesday morning, with remarks from the Honourable Dr. Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal of the convening is to generate, share and advance best and innovative practices for improved access to quality, integrated health and social services for young people nationwide.

The IYS model brings together health, wellness, and social services in one youth-friendly hub. Services are co-located and coordinated, so young people do not have to tell their stories more than once. Across the country, there are currently 126 community youth hubs committed under provincial initiatives; of which 70 are fully operational.

Steve Mathias, Executive Director of Foundry says “We are incredibly grateful for the wonderful opportunity to gather all the integrated youth services networks from across Canada here in the beautiful city of St John’s. We would like to take the opportunity to thank Choices for Youth for hosting this fantastic event.”

“This meeting, as the second in person meeting of Integrated Youth Services Networks from across the country, signifies the critical importance of working together to address youth mental health and substance use needs. By our collective action we can make a bigger difference” says Dr. Jo Henderson, Executive Director of Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario”.

As a proven model in addressing the needs of youth and young families, there is an IYS network either operational or in development in every province and territory in Canada. CFY has worked with 1,000+ youth and 300+ service providers across 32 communities over the last five years to inform a provincial model of IYS and is actively working towards the vision of growing IYS from one site in St. John’s to five sites across the province. In NL, IYS is directly aligned with key health policies, including the family care team model currently being implemented through the Health Accord.

“The implementation of IYS in our province will help ensure that youth have access to services that address their mental health needs while addressing the social determinants of health through housing, basic needs, and employment stability. We are committed to continuing our work with the provincial government, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, and 65+ community agencies to expand IYS across Newfoundland and Labrador”, says Sheldon Pollett, Executive Director of Choices for Youth.

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