

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **\$2.7M renovation transforms St. B.'s McEwen Building**

***Extensive renovations aid healing, recovery of patients accessing Mental Health Program***

**WINNIPEG – May 18, 2021** – St. Boniface Hospital's McEwen Building, where thousands of patients each year find care for mental illness, has been transformed thanks to a \$2.7 M investment from donors and government. The Hospital celebrated the improvements today during a virtual reopening ceremony.

The renovations, completed in April, provide an optimized healing environment for those receiving care through the Hospital's Mental Health Program. Anti-ligature and security upgrades have minimized potential safety risks, while updates to the physical space create a calmer and more home-like setting for inpatients.

"At St. Boniface Hospital, sustainable healing is about rejuvenating the whole person – body, mind, and spirit," said Martine Bouchard, President & CEO of St. Boniface Hospital. "To do so requires therapeutic environments conducive to upholding this philosophy of care in all that we do. Transformed spaces enable transformative care."

Originally a medical student residence, the McEwen Building was converted to house the Hospital's Mental Health Program in the 1980s. It had not received significant updates prior to renovations that began last year.

With the support of the provincial government and St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, the Hospital now has the safe and home-like atmosphere needed to aid in the treatment and healing process.

"We're proud to support St. Boniface Hospital, and the work being done to improve the lives of Manitobans overcoming mental health challenges," said Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery Audrey Gordon. "Having a dedicated unit for mental health will help patients on their journey to wellness."

"In their strong support for this initiative, St. Boniface Hospital Foundation donors have affirmed their belief that mental health is health period," said Carmine Militano, Chair of the Board of Directors of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation. "Their contributions will aid in recovery so that patients can be supported to live independently and with dignity."

The McEwen Building is home to mental health services ranging from psychiatric care to occupational therapy for adult patients living with mental illnesses.

Dr. Jitender Sareen, Specialty Lead, Mental Health and Addictions, Shared Health said, "This renovation will make a positive impact on many lives: over 400 inpatients are admitted every year, and our care teams offer more than 14,000 outpatient visits annually. Patients and their



families will experience a much-improved physical environment that offers hope and healing. For the doctors, nurses, therapists, aides, and all McEwen Building staff who care for patients, this investment sends a message: we see your efforts and you matter.”

**Improvements in the McEwen Building include:**

- Updated inpatient bedrooms that offer space for personal items in a home-like setting,
- Redesigned family and recreation areas that maximize natural light and optimize space,
- Enhanced existing and new additional washrooms to facilitate self-care,
- Upgraded kitchen and dining rooms,
- And enhancements to the spaces used to teach independent living skills.

Each year, 1 in 5 Canadians will personally experience a mental illness (source: Canadian Mental Health Association), and people are facing unprecedented feelings of stress and anxiety during the pandemic.

- The inpatient program has space for 34 patients and more than 400 patients benefit from the program annually.
- The outpatient program care team offers more than 14,000 visits annually.
- The average patient stay is 15 days; some patients are admitted for fewer than three days, and some are treated as inpatients for more than a year.

-30-

**Media Inquiries, contact:**

Lisa Thomson Stifora  
Director of Communications & Stewardship  
St. Boniface Hospital Foundation  
Ph: 431-374-8235  
[lthomsonstifora@stbhf.org](mailto:lthomsonstifora@stbhf.org)

**About St. Boniface Hospital Foundation**

*St. Boniface Hospital Foundation was founded in 1971 and is the primary fundraising organization for St. Boniface Hospital. The Foundation is dedicated to making possible the many innovations in health research and patient care taking place at the Hospital. St. Boniface Hospital is a leader in patient care excellence, delivered with genuine compassion. Research at St. Boniface Hospital is where medical discoveries are made; science is translated into practices that improve human health; and today’s best minds are shaping tomorrow’s advancements in health care. For more information, visit [www.stbhf.ca](http://www.stbhf.ca).*

**About the Mental Health Program**

*St. Boniface Hospital’s Mental Health Program provides multidisciplinary professional psychological and psychiatric services to adults of all ages. The Program has 17 psychiatrists, 35 nurses (a combination of Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Registered Nurses), and 15*



**Hôpital St-Boniface Hospital**  
FONDATION • FOUNDATION

*support staff. McEwen is one of the main teaching sites for residents and medical students. The team works together to treat patients with: Anxiety, Depression, Dementia, and Schizophrenia.*

**Additional Files:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/u0y2j219f82i8hh/AAAZhJsGHm-1qxiqwFN1p1EEa?dl=0>

- Virtual Tour
- Before & After: Inpatient Bedroom
- Before & After: Family room
- Before & After: Dining Room & Lounge