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Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation Family Room opens today at the Royal Alexandra Hospital

EDMONTON – The Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation Family Room opens today, giving pediatric mental health patients and their families a welcoming, friendly space to spend time together while at the Royal Alexandra Hospital.

Located within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit, the hockey-themed room includes murals that depict the Oilers dressing room and features a floor designed to mimic an NHL hockey rink. The modified patient room gives families a comfortable place to stay as they await admission and enjoy private time together during a child's time in hospital. The room also includes space where parents can work in tandem with clinicians on strategies to manage their child's illness and associated behaviours.

"It is so important that the space where we provide care to children, youth and families is warm, therapeutic and engaging," says Mark Snaterse, Executive Director of Addiction and Mental Health at Alberta Health Services (AHS).

"The Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation Family Room provides a colourful, quiet and relaxing environment for our families. It is a wonderful space that will make treatment and education more enjoyable and effective for the families we serve."

About 400 families access child and adolescent mental health services every year at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, which provides both urgent inpatient care and followup treatment. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit houses a multidisciplinary team that specializes in assessment, stabilization and diagnosis of youth aged six to 18 years of age.

"This is another step toward making sure Alberta children facing mental health issues and their families get the care and supports they need," says Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Health. "I commend the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation for being a champion for mental health services and making this fun, welcoming space available for young patients and families."

Construction on the family room started last winter and was funded by the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation (EOCF) through its *Hockey Talks* initiative.

Health and wellness is a key pillar in the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation's mandate to support youth across northern Alberta, an area the EOCF affectionately refers to as Oil Country. The Oilers Foundation has been committed to raising mental health awareness to alleviate the misconceptions and stigma associated with mental illness, says Foundation Chair Richard Wong.

News Release

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“The Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation is deeply committed to raising mental health awareness and supporting youth health and wellness. Our hope is that this family room in the mental health unit at the Royal Alexandra Hospital creates a welcoming space for youth and their families,” says Wong. “This inclusive space will be an important resource for our community here in northern Alberta.”

In addition to supporting the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at the Royal Alexandra Hospital through *HockeyTalks*, the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation has donated more than \$185,000 towards multiple areas of patient care at the Royal Alex since 2003.

“The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation is very pleased to see this space become a reality,” says Andrew Otway, President and CEO.

“The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation values its community partnerships and working with the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation has yielded many positive results for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit at the Royal Alexandra Hospital over the years – most recently with this new family room. Philanthropic support for mental health often lags behind many other health concerns, making the generosity of the Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation very special to our hospital.”

The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation supports a growing number of specialized centres of health care excellence located at the Royal Alexandra Hospital campus, including the Lois Hole Hospital for Women, the CK Hui Heart Centre, the Regional Eye Centre and the Orthopedic Surgery Centre.

The Edmonton Oilers Community Foundation is dedicated to building strong, vibrant and safe communities by demonstrating philanthropic leadership with a focus on education, health and wellness for youth in Northern Alberta.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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