A hospital in Ontario is piloting the Zero Suicide Initiative in its adult ambulatory care program, which serves individuals with mental health issues. If a one-year evaluation determines that it is effective, the initiative will then be scaled up to include the hospital’s inpatient wards. Paul Links, chief psychiatrist at St. Joseph’s Hospital and London Health Sciences Centre, is the program lead. “I thought that Zero Suicide had a lot of potential, and it’s something that deserves to be tried here in Canada,” he said. A key concept of the U.S. 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, Zero Suicide outlines a programmatic approach to preventing suicide within health and behavioral health care systems. St. Joseph’s Hospital is among the first in Canada to test it out, which could lead to adoption by other health care systems across the country. “It’s a way of turning our thinking,” said Dammy Albach, manager of community gatekeeper training for the Canadian Mental Health Association’s British Columbia Division. “We are going to behave a lot differently if we believe most suicides are preventable—and there’s a long list of things we can do to prevent them—rather than if we believe suicide is just going to happen anyway.”

Spark Extra! Learn more about Zero Suicide [2].

Links within this resource