

## Wynne impressed with new St. Joe's facility

### Says \$581m hospital an 'important shift' in health care

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The future of mental-health services in Hamilton is bright.

Premier Kathleen Wynne and Health Minister Deb Matthews were among the dignitaries who got a look at that future as they toured **St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton's** newly opened **West 5th campus** Thursday.

The \$581-million facility on the Mountain brow features plenty of light and comforts not normally seen in hospitals. The facility was designed so more than 70 per cent of the building receives some natural light. The gym, lounges and patient rooms feature large windows and most patient rooms face a garden or courtyard. The site has 16 courtyards and terraces.

Premier Wynne said the facility demonstrates her government's investment in health care and a focus on patients.

"In this climate, light is critical to life, not just healing," said Wynne. "This centre represents an important shift in how we treat mental health in this province."

Matthews said she likes how mental-health services will be integrated with other health services at the facility. Addiction services and diabetes care for the Hamilton region will also be moved into the facility, which will also feature a new MRI machine. The hope is that the public will see the facility as just another hospital and remove some of the stigma for patients.

"This is a new way of looking at mental health," said Matthews. "This will become a place of joy in the community."

With hundreds gathered at the official opening, including the mayor, police chief and politicians, the biggest applause was a standing ovation for Candice Brimner, who told her success story of first being a patient and then becoming an addiction counsellor at the hospital.

Brimner said she was a teenager with lots of friends and a sports enthusiast when she got involved with drugs and life on the street.

"From the first moment (I tried crack cocaine) I was hooked," said Brimner. "I went downhill fast. Every day I prayed that this would be the day I didn't wake up."

That's when she decided to get help and met people at **St. Joseph's** "who loved me when I didn't love myself. It's only because of **St. Joe's** that I am a contributing member of society."