



## **St. Amant launches COVID-19 wellness line to support people with developmental disabilities**

*Winnipeg, MB – May 21, 2020* – Operated by St. Amant counsellors and social workers, the St. Amant COVID-19 Community Wellness Line was developed in response to COVID-19 for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities, their families and support networks.

Understanding that at the best of times, people with disabilities access specialized resources and can have unique needs. Add in a pandemic with lots of uncertainty and changes to how many services operate, and we know that people with disabilities and their support networks may be experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety.

“The goal is to offer compassionate support over the phone, and potentially link callers with services they may need,” said Tracey Kolbauer, a social worker with St. Amant.

Operators will provide supportive therapeutic listening, resource sharing, and clinical skills to assist in areas such as coping, de-escalation, and problem-solving, as appropriate. This is not a crisis line, however, if a caller is deemed to be at risk, the operator will provide emergency contact information.

“Disability supports are unique. Many community organizations and the Province of Manitoba have developed phone and online supports, but we felt there was a gap in this unique area of support specifically for people with developmental disabilities and their supports,” said Kolbauer.

The St. Amant COVID-19 Community Wellness Line is open 9 am – 9 pm, Monday through Thursday, and is available to any Manitoba family affected by a developmental disability. To access the line call: 204-258-7076 or 1-877-858-7076.

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**St. Amant is a leader in the delivery of innovative programs and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism.**