



MEDIA RELEASE

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## Newfoundland and Labrador hosts first province-wide launch of Upopolis social network for young patients

*Youth under medical care can now stay safely connected when it counts the most*

**St. John's** – Eastern Health and Central Health of Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed TELUS Health and Kids' Health Links Foundation (KHLF) to the province today to announce the first province-wide launch of [Upopolis](#), an innovative social networking tool helping pediatric patients access kid-friendly medical content and stay connected to their families, friends and schools. Young patients under medical care at the [Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre](#); [Paradise Youth Treatment Centre](#); and the [Grand Falls-Windsor Youth Treatment Centre](#) now have a safe and secure way of staying connected while undergoing treatment.

Founded and created by [KHLF](#) and [powered by TELUS Health](#), Upopolis.com is Canada's only private, secure and trusted online social network designed for youth receiving medical care in hospitals and treatment centres. Upopolis provides familiar features of social networking, such as personal profiles, micro-blogging, newsfeed, instant chat, and photo uploading while giving patients the opportunity to stay up to date with schoolwork, and navigate through child-friendly medical information verified and approved by health care professionals.

"We are excited to welcome Upopolis to Newfoundland and Labrador so that young people in our province will be able to stay connected with family and friends while in hospital or at our youth treatment centres," said the Honourable Steve Kent, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Community Services. "We understand how critical a child's support network is while receiving care in our facilities, and Upopolis enables that safe connection while empowering our young patients. It provides a connection to medical information in a format they can easily access and understand."

What sets Upopolis apart from typical social networks, aside from its security and privacy, is its therapeutic benefit for the youth who use it. Being able to access medical content written specifically for kids is one of the ways Upopolis does this. Another is its ability to provide a secure and private way for patients and their friends and family outside the hospital or treatment centre to stay connected at a time when they may feel very isolated. In certain cases, patients are also able to connect with other patients who share similar diagnosis, experiences and interests through public and private discussion groups they create.

"Young children receiving medical care have a desire to stay connected using social networks and technology just as other Canadian children do, but the benefit of having a secure and private connection during time spent away from school, friends and family is significant," said Paul Lepage, President, TELUS Health. "TELUS is proud to support the launch of the innovative Upopolis platform for young patients across Newfoundland and Labrador and power the meaningful connections they make during care and beyond in an effort to improve health outcomes."

### [VIDEO](#)

This unique online support network was inspired by the hospital experiences of two teenaged friends, Christina Papaevangelou and Katy McDonald. In February 2002, Christina was admitted to the Intensive

Care Unit at McMaster Children's Hospital with a life-threatening illness. Shortly after, Katy was diagnosed with cancer and had to be hospitalized for a long period of time at The Hospital for Sick Children. Sadly, Katy lost her battle with cancer. However, their friendship and common experiences inspired Christina to explore ways of helping children in care stay connected.

"We launched Upopolis in December of 2007, and today over 1,500 kids in children's hospital across Canada have stayed connected with friends, family, their schools and each other, thanks to the overwhelming support of our partners," said Basile Papaevangelou, chairman and founder of Kids' Health Links Foundation. "We are excited to welcome three new children's facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador to our growing Upopolis family; putting us closer to our goal of making this community available in every children's medical treatment facility across the country."

KHLF and TELUS Health [launched the first Upopolis program](#) in 2007 at McMaster Children's Hospital in Hamilton, ON and since then it has expanded to 13 additional hospitals and health organizations across Canada including: BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver; IWK Health Centre in Halifax; CHEO in Ottawa; The Hospital for Sick Children and Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Toronto; CHU Sainte-Justine University Hospital Centre in Montréal; Lutherwood Youth Treatment Center in Waterloo; Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre in London; Emily's House Pediatric Palliative Care Hospice in Toronto; and now the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre in St. John's; Youth Treatment Centre in Paradise; and the Youth Addictions Treatment Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor.

The Upopolis team and TELUS Health have worked together to ensure each medical facilities' unique needs are met. This includes modifications to ensure accessibility for French speaking users and the addition of separate sites specific to mental health.

### **About the Kids' Health Links Foundation**

The Kids' Health Links Foundation was founded by Basile Papaevangelou and his daughter Christina to foster initiatives focused on alleviating the stress, isolation and loneliness for kids and teens undergoing medical care so that they might be better able to overcome traumatic medical experiences. These initiatives include: Upopolis -- targeting healthy connections for pediatric patients; Upedia -- providing resources supporting child life specialists; and UMIND -- connecting professionals dedicated to child and youth mental health.

For more information about the Kids' Health Links Foundation please visit: [kidshealthlinks.org](http://kidshealthlinks.org).

### **About TELUS Health**

TELUS Health is a leader in tele-homecare, electronic medical and health records, consumer health, benefits management and pharmacy management. TELUS Health solutions give health authorities, providers, physicians, patients and consumers the power to turn information into better health outcomes.

For more information about TELUS Health, please visit [telushealth.com](http://telushealth.com).

### **About TELUS**

TELUS (TSX: T, NYSE: TU) is Canada's fastest-growing national telecommunications company, with \$11.8 billion of annual revenue and 13.5 million customer connections, including 8.0 million wireless subscribers, 3.2 million wireline network access lines, 1.45 million Internet subscribers and 888,000 TELUS TV customers. TELUS provides a wide range of communications products and services, including wireless, data, Internet protocol (IP), voice, television, entertainment and video, and is Canada's largest healthcare IT provider.

In support of our philosophy to give where we live, TELUS, our team members and retirees have contributed more than \$350 million to charitable and not-for-profit organizations and volunteered 5.4 million hours of service to local communities since 2000. Created in 2005 by Executive Chairman Darren Entwistle, TELUS' 11 community boards across Canada have led the company's support of grassroots charities and will have contributed \$47 million in support of 3,700 local charities organizations by the end of 2014, enriching the lives of more than two million Canadian children and youth. TELUS was honoured

to be named the most outstanding philanthropic corporation globally for 2010 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals, becoming the first Canadian company to receive this prestigious international recognition.

For more information about TELUS, please visit [telus.com](http://telus.com).

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