



Media Release

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Stollery Children's Hospital Becomes First Hospital in Alberta to Bring Upopolis Social Network to Young Patients

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

Edmonton – Stollery Children's Hospital has become the first Alberta hospital to join [Upopolis](#), an innovative social support platform and networking tool helping young patients safely and securely access kid-friendly medical content and stay connected to their families, friends and schools while undergoing care.

Founded and created by [Kids' Health Links Foundation](#) (KHLF) and [powered by TELUS Health](#), Upopolis.com is Canada's only private, secure and trusted online social network designed for kids and teens receiving medical care in hospitals and clinics. Upopolis differs from typical social networks by delivering therapeutic benefits for the youth who use it. These benefits include being able to access medical content written in kid-friendly language so patients can better understand their diagnosis and treatment plan; and enabling connections with other patients who share similar diagnoses through public and private discussion groups, which can lead to new friendships, shared experiences and new interests that form a broader support network for the patient.

"The Stollery has among the highest inpatient volumes in the country and serves a diverse patient population from across western Canada," said Lois Wolgemuth, manager child life services, Stollery Children's Hospital. "Upopolis can provide online social support for our patients and help them connect with others in a safe way, stay connected to their communities, and relate to other children and youth on a similar health care journey."

In addition to remaining securely and privately connected with networks outside of the hospital or treatment centre while undergoing care, Upopolis also provides patients with familiar features of social networking such as personal profiles, newsfeed, instant chat, photo uploading and creating spaces based on common interests and/or diagnoses.

"Through the overwhelming support of TELUS as our technology partner, as well as our many individual and corporate supporters, today over 1,700 kids in children's hospitals across Canada have been able to take advantage of Upopolis," said Basile Papaevangelou, chairman and founder of Kids' Health Links Foundation. "Having Stollery Children's Hospital join our Upopolis family puts us a major step closer to our goal of bringing Upopolis to all Canadian children's hospitals, of which there are now only 3 remaining. Our bigger vision is making Upopolis available in every medical treatment facility that serves children and teens across the country, and we are forging ahead towards making that a reality."

KHLF and TELUS Health launched the first Upopolis program in 2007 at McMaster Children's Hospital in Hamilton. Since then it has expanded to 10 additional hospitals and health organizations across Canada. The Upopolis team and TELUS Health also work together to adapt the program to meet the specific needs of each facility, whether adding French language capabilities or information specific to mental health.

“Staying connected with family and friends while undergoing treatment is an important part of any healing process,” said Paul Lepage, President, TELUS Health. “We strongly believe that technology drives better health outcomes for Canadians and by powering Upopolis with our innovative technology we not only help them learn more about their health, but also give caregivers comfort in knowing that young patients can experience these meaningful connections in a safe and secure environment throughout their care cycle.”

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About Alberta Health Services

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.

About TELUS Health

TELUS Health is a leader in telehomecare, 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.

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 paediatric 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.

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