



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members Board of Health
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	December 7, 2015
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Public Health Nurse Secondment to Hamilton Family Health Team as a Community Networker BOH14016(a) (Ward 4) Neighbourhood Development Strategy – Community Networker Pilot Project CM13001(b) (Ward 4)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Ward 4
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<b>SUBMITTED BY &amp; SIGNATURES:</b>	Jessica Hopkins, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC Acting Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department          Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community and Emergency Services Department

## Council Direction:

Not Applicable

## Information:

On April 3, 2013, General Issues Committee approved the recommendations of Report CM13001(b) permitting the City of Hamilton to enter into a partnership with the McQuesten Community Planning Team, the Hamilton Family Health Team (HFHT) and the Hamilton Community Foundation, to pilot an innovative approach to improve both health and social outcomes for McQuesten residents. This report will provide the final report on this pilot project.

### **Historical Background**

The McQuesten Community Planning Team, with support from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, completed a neighbourhood action plan in 2012. One of the goals of this plan is to enhance community health and well-being by improving access to primary health care providers within or close to the neighbourhoods. The McQuesten Neighbourhood Action Plan was unanimously endorsed by the General Issues Committee in September 2012 (Report CM12013) with the commitment that staff would work with community partners to assist with the implementation of the plans.

One of those partnership discussions arose between the HFHT, the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and resulted in a request to Council (Report CM13001(b)), to utilize \$25,000 of the Neighbourhood Strategy Fund to assist in the delivery of this initiative.

The pilot consisted of the creation of a Community Nurse Networker (CNN) position within the HFHT, a role combining clinical skills, community development, and advocacy within a social determinant of health framework to assist families and individuals with their social and health needs. A Public Health Nurse was seconded into the pilot position in September 2013 and the position spent equal time working with the HFHT, and providing support to the community from the St. Helen's Centre at McQuesten. The CNN assisted residents/clients of the neighbourhood to articulate their broad range of needs (based on the determinants of health), and then worked with them to develop and implement plans to address those needs. As well, the CNN facilitated connections to resources while building their capacity to independently engage those services.

After the first year, it was determined that a more thorough evaluation of the project outcomes needed to be undertaken, given the positive anecdotal response from residents. An extension for one year was requested and granted by Community and Emergency Services (Report CES14031), to be funded through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy.

Over the course of the two-year pilot project, the City of Hamilton contributed \$50,000 from the Neighbourhood Strategy Fund, which leveraged investments in the pilot project of \$125,000 from the HFHT and \$25,000 from the Hamilton Community Foundation.

The pilot project ended in September 2015, and the Public Health Nurse has returned to her home position within Public Health Services.

### **Findings of the Project**

The executive summary of the evaluation conducted by the HFHT is attached (Appendix A) and notes that in total, the CNN had over 500 interactions with clients at the community center and connected approximately 80 individuals to family doctors.

Based on the evaluation (Appendix A) of the CNN pilot program, a number of initiatives were carried out, including:

- A pilot program to have youth transported during the summer to the Literacy Camp at Cathy Weaver school;
- Assisting the McQuesten Youth Leaders in their employment fair project; and
- Linking the Ontario Works Program with the Hillcrest School breakfast program to find a sustainable solution to needed volunteers.

In addition, the CNN assisted the community to identify and maximize internal and external assets and to increase resident engagement in the McQuesten neighbourhood.

The following are some of the narrative findings from interviews with residents and service providers that complement the results noted in Appendix A:

#### ***Neighbour 1***

“The Nurse Networker has been helping direct my family to get the help we need. She knows where to direct me for the avenues I need. She has definitely made an impact on the life of me and my family. If it wasn’t for her I would probably still be stuck with all the same problems. I really think this nurse idea is really great.”

#### ***Neighbour 2***

“Because I have struggled in my own life when she (Nurse Networker) asks me “How can I help you or how can I assist you”, it brings me to tears. She has helped me with navigating Ontario Works when I am feeling paralyzed by intense stress and has given me support on a number of occasions”.

#### ***Neighbour 3***

The Nurse Networker is a necessity for help with accessing services. I’ve had a couple of issues that have come up (interpersonal, parenting, financial, health) and I go to her. The community centre is in a great location; she is really close to everyone here. I just think it’s a necessity having a nurse around the neighbourhood”.

#### ***Service Provider***

“The Nurse navigator (networker) is part of the team, she is an integral part of the McQuesten community and the whole is greater than the sum.”

Overall, the HFHT and McQuesten community residents valued the CNN position and expressed a desire for the project to continue.

The HFHT indicated that they would have been prepared to continue the pilot project for a third year if there was a partner who could provide 50% of the required funding (approximately \$50,000). The third year of the project would have been used to determine if the results achieved in the McQuesten neighbourhood by one CNN could be maintained, if one CNN also served two additional Neighbourhood Action Strategy neighbourhoods. Given the changes in provincial funding for public health units and the decreasing balance of the neighbourhood reserve, Public Health Services and Community and Emergency Services were unable to secure long-term sustainable funding for the position.