



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 19, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Families First Pilot in Hamilton (BOH17024) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Vanessa Parlette, (905) 546-2424, Ext. 6462
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not Applicable

Information:

The purpose of this report is to inform Board of Health of an opportunity to collaborate with Peel Public Health to pilot and evaluate an evidence-based program for lone parent families. The Families First program will involve collaboration across PHS and C&ES to offer families integrated supports between home visiting, child care, Ontario Works, employment, and recreation. Evaluation of this program in Peel has demonstrated significant improvements in quality of life and earning potential along with reduced reliance on social assistance and health services. PHS and C&ES staff are partnering with Region of Peel to apply for Local Poverty Reduction Funding to replicate and evaluate success of Families First. Expansion of this program to Hamilton will better integrate intensive supports for lone parents, leading to reduced poverty and improved health and social outcomes.

Background:

Families First is an intensive case management program offering wraparound supports for lone parent families to build pathways out of poverty and improve their quality of life.

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The program “includes four key components: health, employment, childcare, and recreation for children.” The components are delivered holistically through an integrated service model. In Hamilton service delivery will be integrated through collaboration between Public Health, Ontario Works, Early Years, and Recreation.

The Families First program assists lone parent families to:

- Improve their financial situation,
- Improve mental and physical health of parents and children,
- Increase physical activity, healthy choices, and self-esteem for children and youth,
- Improve children’s school performance to break long-term cycles of poverty, and
- Reduce use of health care, social services, and social assistance.

Evaluation of Families First has concluded that the program meets these objectives. Over a two year period, compared to families only receiving Ontario Works, parents participating in Families First reported:

- Substantial improvements in their emotional, mental, and physical health,
- A 55% reduction in hospital admissions,
- Improvements in children’s behaviour and school performance, and
- A 10% increase in employment or educational upgrading.

Public savings cover the costs of implementing Families First in as little as two years through 15% reduction in social service costs and 15% reduction in social assistance use.

Families First Pilot in Hamilton

PHS and C&ES staff are planning to pilot the Families First model in Hamilton. Intensive wraparound will be achieved by enhancing: coordination of health and community services through home visiting; employment supports and streamlined childcare access to increase earning potential; family transit passes; and free children’s recreation. This integrated model delivered through Public Health, Community Services, and Ontario Works will improve: family stability, mental and physical health, income, and education outcomes.

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Funding Application and Collaboration with Region of Peel

To secure resources for program delivery and evaluation, staff are preparing an application for funding through Ontario Trillium Foundation's Local Poverty Reduction Fund. City of Hamilton has partnered with Region of Peel, Human Services Department to coordinate evaluation between the two sites. Consistent program delivery and evaluation between Hamilton and Peel allows leveraging of shared learnings to advance provincial poverty reduction and system integration goals. The funding application is due on June 28, 2017 with results expected in late fall 2017. Staff will report back to Board of Health on the funding result and development of the pilot by December 2017.

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