



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Update on Health Partnerships to Pursue Increase to Permanent Supportive Housing Options (HSC23013) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Emergency and Community Services Committee directed at their meeting of December 9, 2021 "That staff report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee in January 2022 on the current efforts in dealing with the Ontario Health Team with regards to increasing funding for supportive housing in Hamilton."

INFORMATION

Housing Services Division is actively building relationships with health sector partners to develop evidence-based models for delivering and funding low barrier supportive housing to clients of the homeless-serving system. There is an enormous gap in Hamilton supporting people with the highest complexity of needs. For about 10% of those accessing the homelessness system, or about 150 people currently, there are no funded homelessness support programs that are equipped to provide the level of supports needed to address the multitude of health and system barriers they face to securing stable housing. Many people with a very high level of acuity will require ongoing intensive mental and physical health supports, often in the form of permanent

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supportive housing, in order to meet their daily needs and work towards improved well-being through housing and life stability.

The limited supply of supportive housing that does exist in Hamilton is primarily funded by and administered through the Ministry of Health and healthcare providers who are transfer payment agencies with Ontario Health. This means that the homeless-serving system does not have direct access to this essential resource for people accessing the homelessness system who present with the highest levels of acuity. Having said that, in 2022, Hamilton's homeless-serving system supported 345 individuals with mid and high levels of acuity to secure stable housing through intensive case management, rapid rehousing, and transitional living programs. This was achieved with funding through \$4,432,703 in Reaching Home investment for 2022/23 and \$488,720 for transitional housing through the provincial Homelessness Prevention program. However, in a given year there are approximately 200 people experiencing homelessness who require more intensive place-based health supports that are not eligible under homelessness funding programs.

Housing Services Division has undertaken the following initiatives to establish expanded availability and access to permanent supportive housing for those in our community who are most vulnerable. In all of these initiatives, the Coalition for Hamilton's Indigenous Leadership and Indigenous partners are engaged in the development of priorities, policies, and programs.

- In February 2022, Housing Services Division collaborated with the Hamilton Anchor Institutions Leadership and health sector partners to submit a proposal to the Ministry of Health and the Associate Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction for 100 units of supportive housing. A follow up letter of advocacy was sent at the end of October 2022 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Health, and Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addiction. This is one action in a series of government relations efforts the City has undertaken as a result of our provincial priorities and wider government relations strategy.
- Identified within the City's Government Relations Strategy is an emphasis on further advocacy at both the provincial and federal-level regarding permanent, supportive housing for Hamiltonians with the highest and most complex needs.
- The City of Hamilton is also working in partnership with Good Shepherd to renovate a property and develop the program structure to offer permanent housing with supports for 73 women, transgender, and non-binary individuals experiencing homelessness in Hamilton. This is the first time the City has funded permanent supportive housing with oversight to ensure all units are made available through the homeless-serving sector in the first half of 2023 (HSC22047).
- The Integrated Supports Pilot (ISP), partially funded by the province, was launched in January 2021 as a partnership between City of Hamilton, St. Joseph's Hospital Hamilton (SJHH), and Canadian Mental Health Association

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(CMHA) Hamilton Branch with the aim to stabilize housing for 15 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with high acuity mental illness and/or substance use disorder through coordination of clinical and non-clinical supports. Through this pilot, City of Hamilton has offered subsidized housing in the form of rent geared to income units at Vanier Towers or a portable housing subsidy along with support from City-funded Housing First Intensive Case Management provided through: Aboriginal Housing Services, now transitioned to Hamilton Regional Indian Centre; Good Shepherd Centre Hamilton; Mission Services; and Wesley Urban Ministries. SJHH has contributed clinical staff support for occupational therapy, mental health, and addictions with a lead social worker to convene care coordination. CMHA has contributed peer support workers and nursing care. Clients of this pilot program are people who would otherwise not be adequately supported through any of these programs independently.

- Through the incremental increase to federal Reaching Home funding received for the 2022-2023 fiscal year (HSC22032), the City of Hamilton has been able to temporarily fund a part time Nurse Practitioner, Mental Health Worker, Harm Reduction Worker, and Registered Nurse as part of Good Shepherd's housing first Intensive Case Management and Rapid Re-Housing programs through to March 31, 2023. These positions will provide the health supports essential for approximately 15-20 clients to attain and maintain housing.

Beyond those specific initiatives, Housing Services Division is engaging in ongoing conversations with Ontario Health West, and health partners through the Greater Hamilton Health Network to explore potential to bring health supports into existing and new housing units. Staff from Healthy and Safe Communities, including representatives from Public Health Services, Housing Services and Hamilton Paramedic Services sit on various GHHN working tables to further these and related discussions regarding required resourcing and program and service enhancement opportunities for Hamiltonians requiring health, human and social service supports.

The Housing Services Division also remains in close contact with the Government Relations Division in order to ensure advocacy, strategy and alignment within existing initiatives and further identification of opportunities to collaborate on innovative solutions with provincial and federal counterparts.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None