

For Information Only

Out of the Cold Shelter Update

Presented To:	Community Services Committee
Presented:	Monday, Sep 19, 2016
Report Date	Wednesday, Aug 24, 2016
Type:	Correspondence for Information Only

Resolution

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Finance Implications

No financial implications, for information only.

Health Impact Assessment

This program addresses barriers and is intended to enhance services to persons who are chronically homeless. Service data will be collected to monitor the results by program usage.

Background

Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter

The Out of the Cold Emergency Shelter program (OTC) successfully operated as a low barrier emergency shelter program for a second full season from November 1st 2015 to April 15th 2016 at 200 Larch Street, Sudbury. The program was operated by the Salvation Army and funded by the City of Greater Sudbury, utilizing both Federal and Provincial homelessness funding.

The OTC program was open from 8:00 pm until 7:00 am every evening, and provided temporary cots, nutritious refreshments, and a safe warm place for men and women aged 16 and over. This was a low barrier program intended to provide shelter for people who may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or be otherwise disconnected from mainstream shelter programs. This Program provided an additional 30 cots to the existing 64 emergency shelter beds in our community.

An average of 60 people per night accessed some type of service at the OTC, with an average of 29 people per night utilizing a cot for sleeping. Some people used the service in the evening for social interaction, coffee and soup, and support. Additional services offered to the OTC participants were bus tickets, clothing,

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Health Impact Review

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Division Review

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Recommended by the Department

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and personal hygiene products. Many of the shelter users have experienced chronic or episodic homelessness, have mental health or addictions and have multiple barriers to finding and keeping housing.

The OTC program had previously run as a pilot program from February 19th 2014 to March 31st 2014, and then for a full winter season from December 1st 2014 to April 15th 2015. From November 2014 to November 2015 \$108,030 has been invested from Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding to complete upgrades at 200 Larch Street to meet the life safety requirements for the operation of the program.

Community Linkages

The OTC program has developed strong linkages with Greater Sudbury Police, Emergency Services, community outreach teams, and other community services to provide a safe and supportive program. On December 7th 2015 an Open House was held at 200 Larch Street for the Harm Reduction Day Program and Out of the Cold Shelter Program.

Client Navigators

CGS Social Services Division received one time Provincial funding through the Local Poverty Reduction Fund to hire two client navigator positions to work with people using the OTC program. One client navigator was aboriginal and one was bilingual. The client navigator's role was to create relationships with people using the OTC program and assist them to access health and housing supports. Some examples of assistance provided included helping people access Ontario Works supports, accompanying people to hospital or withdrawal management, connecting people to the services offered through the Homelessness Network or N'swakomok Native Friendship Centre, and accompanying people to apartment viewings and to purchase furniture or household items. The client navigator positions provided an additional level of service to persons who may require greater support to secure housing. One goal of the fund was to evaluate the effectiveness of providing these positions in a low barrier shelter. Evaluation for this program was provided by the Social Planning Council.

Harm Reduction Home Day Program

In December 2015 the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) started operation of a Harm Reduction Day Program Pilot Project. The program services individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and are alcohol dependent. The Harm Reduction Program offers access to meals, primary care, skill development, social supports and a managed alcohol program. the program is currently located at 200 Larch Street and operates from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm daily.

The co-location of the two programs has created awareness, access and support for participants of both programs. CMHA continues to seek for a permanent residential location for the program to offer accommodations and around the clock service and supports.

The development of both the Harm Reduction Home and a Low Barrier Emergency Shelter Program came from priorities identified through a harm reduction consultation led by the North East LHIN in partnership with the City of Greater Sudbury and other community partners. Low barrier refers to a shelter where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to stay there. The aim is to have as few barriers as possible to allow more people to have access to services. Low barrier facilities follow a Harm Reduction philosophy.

Next Steps

The City of Greater Sudbury will issue a Request for Proposal to operate a Low Barrier Emergency Shelter Program from November 1st to April 15th each year, with an option to extend to a full year Program dependent on funding and operational considerations. The City of Greater Sudbury will continue to use the

facility at 200 Larch Street for the operation of both a Low Barrier Emergency Shelter Program and a Harm Reduction Home Day Program for as long as available.

Given that there already exists a program in the community called Out of the Cold, the emergency shelter program will be renamed.