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CORE FUNDING SUPPORT FOR THE AIDS COMMITTEE OF YORK REGION

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, December 7, 2005, from the Commissioner of Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Council receive this report for information

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Council that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has granted the AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR) annual core funding of \$80,000 per year, and to outline current and future assistance provided to the ACYR by York Region Health Services (YRHS).

3. BACKGROUND

The ACYR services include providing education and facilitating access to care for individuals with HIV/AIDS. Most importantly, the ACYR role is significant as many individuals infected, affected, or at risk for HIV/AIDS are more likely to seek assistance from a community-based agency rather than a government-associated public health department.

In November 1999, the Chair of the ACYR appeared before the then Health and Social Services Committee to outline the services provided by the agency. At that time, the ACYR Committee Chair explained that it lacked provincial core funding and requested assistance from the Region to secure adequate funding for the agency. The Health and Social Services Committee directed YRHS to provide assistance to the ACYR in its search for funding.

On July 6, 2000, an update on the status of funding for the ACYR was presented to Council in Clause No. 15 of Report No. 8 of the Health and Social Services Committee. This report outlined the negative results of staff discussions with the AIDS Bureau of the MOHLTC regarding provincial funding for the ACYR. At that time, YRHS was directed to again urge the MOHLTC to address the funding inequities for AIDS service organizations across the province. The Regional Clerk was also directed to send a letter to this effect to the AIDS Bureau. In response to this letter, the AIDS Bureau stated that

there was no new core funding for AIDS service organizations available from the province.

On September 19, 2002, a further update was presented to Council in Clause No. 1 of Report No. 7 of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee. This report outlined the ongoing assistance provided to the ACYR by YRHS of a 0.5 Public Health Nurse from the AIDS program, and outlined that “the Public Health Nurse, in collaboration with other Board members, was successful in obtaining a total of \$355,000 in project funding, comprised of \$220,000 over five years from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to hire a Program Manager, and \$135,000 over three years from the Regional AIDS Community Action Program to hire a Community Development Worker.”

3.1 YRHS Role in HIV/AIDS

YRHS is mandated by the MOHLTC to “reduce the incidence of and complications from all sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS.” To this end, YRHS conducts clinical testing and contact tracing of individuals with HIV/AIDS and provides health promotion activities including the provision of condoms.

3.2 Present YRHS Assistance to the ACYR

Since the last report to Council, YRHS has continued to assist the ACYR in the following ways:

- Provision of the assistance of a Public Health Nurse from the AIDS program to sit on the Board of Directors to actively pursue funding opportunities
- Minimal provision of administrative supports related to faxing, mailing and clerical support
- Continued provision of office space at no charge (re-assessed on an annual basis) in the Newmarket Health Centre

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Award of Core Funding to the ACYR

In December 2004, the Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health for the Region facilitated an introduction between the Public Health Nurse working with the AIDS Committee and the Minister of Health, the Honourable George Smitherman. The Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health and the Public Health Nurse brought the ACYR funding issue to the attention of Minister Smitherman, who initiated further inquiries and dialogue on the subject. At that time, the ACYR was the only AIDS Committee in Ontario that did not receive provincial core funding.

In October 2005, the MOHLTC granted the ACYR core funding in the amount of \$80,000 per year. Tony Wong, MPP for Markham, announced the funding award at the ACYR Annual General Meeting on October 20, 2005.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

YRHS's work with the ACYR supports the Vision 2026 goal of Responding to the Needs of our Residents.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The level of assistance to the ACYR presently provided through the YRHS budget is approximately \$42,500 per year, which includes a 0.5 FTE Public Health Nurse. This amount is accommodated in the existing Public Health cost-shared budget. In addition, the Department provides office space to ACYR at no additional cost.

In the future, as the ACYR gains strength and community profile, the Public Health Nurse role can be reduced and reallocated to other mandatory health programs and services related to HIV/AIDS.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

As of December 2004, 99 new cases of HIV infection have been reported to YRHS since 2000. HIV and AIDS cases are attributed to the health units on the basis of the health unit of residence at the time of initial diagnosis. The ACYR presently provides support to over 70 clients and the agency case load is increasing at approximately two additional clients per month.

This data may still under-represent actual service levels in York Region. It is apparent by contacts made through YRHS and the ACYR that many clients may reside in the Region after an initial diagnosis in another jurisdiction.

The annual funding provided to the ACYR by the MOHLTC will assist it to move forward with its plans to meet the service needs of the community.

7. CONCLUSION

Support for a local AIDS Committee is in compliance with the MOHLTC's *Mandatory Health Services and Program Guidelines*. Collaborative programming and cooperation with ACYR continues to be part of the present YRHS programming initiatives.

The current level of Public Health Nurse involvement in the ACYR will gradually be reduced and reallocated to other aspects of HIV/AIDS mandatory health programs and services in the future due to the new annual core funding obtained by the ACYR.

The awarding of core funding by the MOHLTC to the ACYR will allow the agency to hire additional permanent staff, expand its programming to benefit clients, and reduce its reliance on YRHS supports.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.