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HUMAN SERVICES PLANNING UPDATE

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, November 2, 2005, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on major Human Services Planning initiatives, including the *Inclusivity Action Plan*, government relations strategy and research partnerships.

3. BACKGROUND

The *Human Services Strategy* was adopted by Regional Council in November 2000. The Human Services Planning Branch was established in February 2001 to implement the recommendations of the strategy.

Among numerous initiatives, the Human Services Planning Branch is providing support to three current projects which fulfill the *Human Services Strategy's* recommendations for leadership, collaborative endeavours and increased access to shared knowledge.

The *Inclusivity Action Plan* (IAP) is a community plan to increase York Region's capacity to respond to and meet the needs of immigrants and new Canadians. It creates a framework for participation by all service providers, governments, ethno-cultural organizations, employers and individual residents. After an extensive community consultation the plan was launched in May 2005. A Steering Committee and six Working Groups have been established to implement the plan.

At its meeting on August 29, 2005, the Human Services Planning Coalition's (HSPC) Policy and Priorities Action Group (PPAG) endorsed phase two of its government relations strategy. Key objectives of the strategy include establishing a relationship with local political champions, securing additional funding and program approval from the province for human services in York Region and gaining a meaningful role in the integrated planning process of the central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). This initiative is a jointly funded partnership between the Region, York Region's three

hospitals, the school boards and the United Way. Counsel Public Affairs (CPA), with principals Charles Beer and Caroline Pinto, have been retained as strategic counsel.

The Research and Innovation Action Group (RIAG) of the HSPC was created in 2002 to support integrated human services planning, policy, and decision-making in York Region. The Action Group's mandate is to identify and develop research and innovation projects and foster partnerships between research institutions such as York University, HSPC sectors, and the broader human services community in York Region. The RIAG has identified a number of projects and research partners to work with in 2005-2006.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Inclusivity Action Plan (IAP)

4.1.1 Recent Developments

Over the summer months, the six Working Groups completed work plans and, in September, the IAP Steering Committee approved a co-ordinated work plan. Highlights of the work plan are as follows:

- A total of 21 different projects were identified, including establishing a Welcome Resource Centre, developing sector specific language programs, organizing celebration events, and creating school curriculum tools
- 47 different human services organizations are involved in the six Working Groups
- 88 individual participants from human services providers and the community are participating in the six Working Groups to implement the IAP

4.1.2 Meeting with potential funders

Chaired by Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti, the IAP Steering Committee organized a meeting on October 21, 2005 with potential funders from federal and provincial government and agencies, including Services Canada (formerly HRSDC), Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. At this meeting, the Steering Committee presented the IAP projects and preliminary costs to the funders. Working Group chairs explored funding possibilities and options with the funders.

This meeting was a first step in a process of consultation and provided a good opportunity to share information and gain knowledge of the IAP projects. The initial response from the funders was encouraging and more work is to be completed in project costing.

4.1.3 Next Steps

The IAP Steering Committee will continue to:

- Link IAP awareness and funding efforts to the government relations strategy of HSPC
- Continue to pursue funding sources from federal and provincial government

- Implement IAP communication plan and tools
- Research the impacts of immigration on human services in York Region

The Steering Committee will continue to meet monthly to coordinate the implementation of the projects outlined in the work plans.

4.2 Government Relations Strategy

4.2.1 Recent Developments

The Policy and Priorities Action Group (PPAG) of the HSPC approved a strategy which contains the following key elements:

1. Government Relations Plan
 - a) Secure local Cabinet Ministers as champions for increased funding for York Region
 - b) Meet with provincial/federal ministers and their staff
 - c) Secure a role in the Central LHIN's integrated planning process
2. Reinforce and Reposition the HSPC
3. Focus on three specific priority program areas
 - a) LHIN relationship
 - b) IAP
 - c) Children's Mental Health

4.2.2 Next Steps

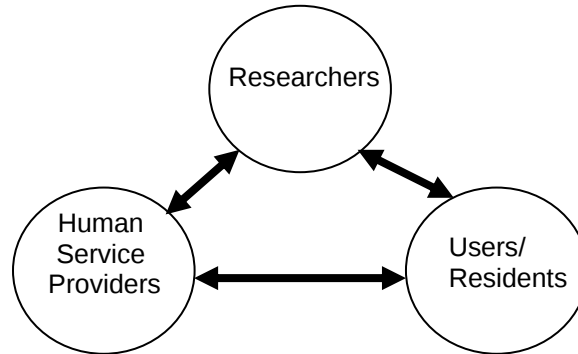
Based on the key objectives and elements of the Government Relations Strategy, the next steps will be:

- Meeting with local MPs/MPPs
- Developing a relationship with LHIN through meetings and ongoing communications
- Promoting and formalizing political and ministry support of integrated collaborative funding models for children's mental health program
- Leveraging support for IAP federally and provincially

4.3 Research Projects and Partnerships

4.3.1 Key Role for HSPC

The Research and Innovation Action Group (RIAG) of the HSPC plays a key role in promoting best practices in human services planning. The RIAG has a mandate to oversee and coordinate HSPC's research agenda. The HSPC brokers a triangular relationship between research partners.



Through its brokerage role, the HSPC fosters partnerships between research institutions and the broader human services community to mobilize knowledge creation and transfer.

4.3.2 Research Partnerships

- York University

- a) *The Knowledge Broker Model: Knowledge Mobilization for the Social Sciences and Humanities.*

This project will facilitate the transfer of leading edge academic research to human service providers and policy makers. York University, in partnership with the University of Victoria, has been awarded \$660,000 over three years to fund a pilot. York University has confirmed its commitment to partner with HSPC to maximize the exchange of knowledge between York Region service providers and York University researchers.

- b) *Infrastructure in York Region: A GIS Analysis of Human Services*

This project is designed to use geographic information system (GIS) to develop an inventory of human services in York Region, assess their availability and identify gaps in service provision. HSPC sector representatives will be included in a team of multidisciplinary researchers. A letter of intent has been submitted to Infrastructure Canada for funding.

- c) *Ontario Research Chair in Educational Achievement and At-Risk Students*

The primary goal of this project is to promote knowledge mobilization through partnerships between researchers, educators and human service professionals. Practical tools will be developed through an interactive participatory process involving researchers and educators. These tools will help educators implement intervention strategies and adapt the environment to accommodate at-risk students' needs and learning. HSPC has been recognized as one of the four founding partners in the proposed strategy associated with the Chair in Educational Achievement and At-Risk Students. The project proposal has been developed and funding sources are under development.

- Canadian Urban Institute and United Way of York Region

- York Pulse*

This project will develop a well-researched, community based guide to measure York Region's achievement of social equity and attainment of a high quality of life. It will

complement York Region's annual update of *Vision 2026* and sustainability report. A project proposal has been developed and is under discussion.

4.3.3 Next Steps

A research and innovation agenda has been developed and submitted to the HSPC for approval at its meeting on November 23, 2005. The Research and Innovation Action Group (RIAG) will clarify roles and responsibilities in the *Knowledge Mobilization* project. In addition, the discussion group of *York Pulse* will continue proposal development and securing partner agreements.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

The implementation of IAP will contribute to the goal of creating "quality communities for a diverse population" by recognizing our multicultural population, responding to our diversity with innovative service delivery options and being responsive to the needs of immigrants and newcomers in York Region.

The government relations strategy will build a case for the under-funding of human services and focus on specific program priorities. It works to secure new funding models to "respond to the needs of our residents".

The *York Pulse* project will measure York Region's quality of life against some well-researched benchmarks. The purpose is to provide a tool to respond to the needs of York Region's changing communities and achieve a "managed and balanced growth". In addition, the goal of "infrastructure for a growing region" will be enhanced by the "*Infrastructure in York Region: A GIS Analysis of Human Services*" project, which will address the infrastructure needs that have arisen during York Region's rapid growth.

All these initiatives will engage service providers and community representatives, and will thus advance the goal of "engaged communities and a responsive region".

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All regional expenditures associated with these programs were approved in the 2005 budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities are important partners in the provision of human services in York Region. Programs and services provided by the Human Services Planning Branch continually and consistently include representation of the interests of area municipalities.

The *Inclusivity Action Plan* will provide outcomes of significant value to residents of local area municipalities.

The government relations strategy pledges that HSPC will continue to work with local area municipalities in York Region to brief them on status of initiatives and secure their support.

Research findings from HSPC's research partnership will be made available to social planners and policy makers in local area municipalities and will help them to make informed decisions in delivering human services to their residents.

7. CONCLUSION

This report is an update on some of the major initiatives in human services planning. These initiatives complement each other and work together to improve funding and service delivery effectiveness and efficiency for human services in York Region.

As the above initiatives move forward and produce positive outcomes, the Region's leadership in establishing collaborative planning models and supporting the HSPC will be demonstrated both at the community and at the provincial level. In the long run, the IAP, government relations strategy and research partnerships will become important instruments in achieving the goals set in the *Human Services Strategy*.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.