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GEORGINA COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE COUNCIL AGREEMENT

(Regional Councillor Wheeler declared an interest in the following Clause. He made his declaration due to the fact that his wife is an employee of a local medical facility. He did not take part in the consideration or discussion of, or vote on, this item.)

(Regional Council at its meeting on March 25, 2004, amended Recommendations 1 and 2 to delete the words “approves” and “approved” respectively and replace them with “is notified” and “has been notified of”.)

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, February 20, 2004, from the Commissioner of Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee and Regional Council authorize the Health Services Department to enter into an agreement with the Georgina Community Health Care Council for the professional services of two Registered Nurses in the Extended Class (also known as Nurse Practitioners) to work in the York Region Sexual Health Clinic in Sutton at no cost to the Health Services Department provided that the Council of the Town of Georgina approves this arrangement.
2. The Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health be authorized to execute any agreement required to put into effect this arrangement between the Georgina Community Health Care Council and The Regional Municipality of York upon being advised that the Council of the Town of Georgina has approved this arrangement.
3. This report be circulated by the Regional Clerk to the Clerk of the Town of Georgina for approval by the Council of the Town of Georgina.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain the authorization from Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee and Regional Council to enter into an agreement with the Georgina Community Health Care Council to obtain the professional services of two Registered Nurses in the Extended Class to work in the York Region Sexual Health Clinic in Sutton.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Sexual Health Clinic - Sutton

The *Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997* issued by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), with which every public health unit is required to comply, sets out the following objectives for sexual health programs: to decrease the rate of pregnancy in women 15–19 years of age, increase access to contraception for individuals in need, and to increase individual's awareness about personal responsibility regarding sexual relationships.

The objective of the Health Services Department's Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS program is to reduce the incidence of these diseases. These joint objectives have resulted in the establishment of sexual health clinics in various areas of the Region.

The Sutton Sexual Health Clinic, located in the Sutton High School, has been operating since 1996. This clinic was opened in response to a need for young people to have access to sexual health services that did not require significant travel or expense. The purpose of sexual health clinics is to decrease the number of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and prevent unplanned pregnancies. The sexual health clinics provide confidential services, such as testing for STDs, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C; counselling for birth control options; and providing condoms and low cost oral contraceptives..

The Sutton Sexual Health Clinic has traditionally had a physician see clients for annual cervical screening, testing and treatment for STDs, follow-up of abnormal test results and referral to specialists every second Tuesday. However, it has become difficult to find a physician to come to the clinic on a regular basis due to the limited number of physicians available in the area and the corresponding heavy workloads of existing physicians.

As a result, physician services have not been offered at the Sutton Clinic since September 2003. Clients requiring physician services are referred to the Newmarket Sexual Health Clinic, their family physician or the Nurse Practitioners at the Georgina Medical Centre. However, many clients are reluctant to consult their family physicians for sexual health matters and travel to Newmarket is often impossible for young adolescents.

3.2 Georgina Community Health Care Council

The Georgina Community Health Care Council ("the Council") is a not for profit corporation established in June 2001 with a mandate to look at the health care needs of the residents in the Town of Georgina and find solutions to the health care services shortage.

The Council currently employs two Registered Nurses in the Extended Class and is participating in a demonstration project, funded by the MOHLTC until March 31, 2005, to introduce these nurses into different practice settings. Expectations of this demonstration project are to form partnerships with other community groups in the areas

where the Registered Nurses are practicing and to provide service in settings other than that of their clinical practice.

Under the regulations to the *Nursing Act, 1991*, Registered Nurses registered in the Extended Class are given independent authority to perform the following additional controlled acts: to diagnose common disorders and diseases; to prescribe and administer certain treatments and medications; and to order basic diagnostic tests such as ultrasounds, x-rays and lab tests.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Through the MOHLTC demonstration project, the Health Services Department is proposing to partner with the Council to utilize its two Registered Nurses in the Extended Class in the provision of quality care to the Sutton Sexual Health Clinic at no cost to the Region. The Registered Nurses in the Extended Class are licensed and governed by the College of Nurses of Ontario. The Registered Nurses in the Extended Class will be supervised by a local physician, Dr. Olga Gorodetsky, who will also be responsible for consulting with and overseeing the performance of their services at the Sutton Sexual Health Clinic (as arranged by the Georgina Community Health Care Council).

The Sutton Sexual Health clinic is currently staffed by two York Region Public Health Nurses every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. to provide counselling. The two new Registered Nurses in the Extended Class would enhance these services by conducting annual cervical screening, testing and treating STDs, and providing oral contraceptives and referrals as required. In accordance with the standards of the Ontario College of Nurses, the scope of practice of the Registered Nurses in the Extended Class, working with Public Health Nurses, allows for the provision of the services required in the Sexual Health Clinics as outlined in the *Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997*.

Initially, the Registered Nurses in the Extended Class would work in the Sutton Sexual Health Clinic once every two weeks alongside the Public Health Nurses. If there is a greater demand, additional hours may be added. The arrangement will be for a one-year period subject to extension if evaluation of the arrangement is deemed satisfactory.

At the end of the one-year period, The Regional Municipality of York would have the option to extend the arrangement under the same terms and conditions, including the condition that the services be provided at no cost to The Region. Also, at the end of the one-year period, The Regional Municipality of York would be under no obligation to continue the use of, or retain the services of, the Registered Nurses in the Extended Class. The Health Services staff will also attempt to retain a physician for the provision of services at the Sutton Sexual Health Clinic once the arrangement with the Registered Nurses of the Extended Class expires.

4.1 Relationship to Vision 2026

This initiative is consistent with several goals outlined in York Region's Vision 2026 document. Specifically, this initiative supports a high quality of life, promotes public wellness, meets people's basic needs and demonstrates York Region's commitment to being a responsive Region.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional costs associated with this agreement as the professional services will be provided free of charge by the Georgina Health Care Council.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Service access in the Town of Georgina, an area recognized as being under-serviced by the MOHLTC, will be improved by the addition of these Registered Nurses of the Extended Class in the Sutton Sexual Health Clinic. Establishing a partnership with the Council to share the services of these nurses will also advance the mandates of both the Council and the York Region Health Services Department and assist in the creation of a healthier community.

7. CONCLUSION

One of the roles of the Health Services Department is to provide accessible health care services for the residents of York Region. The Town of Georgina currently has a shortage of physicians and is unable to meet the needs of all its residents. By partnering with the Council, York Region Health Services will be able to provide needed quality care to residents and meet the objectives in the *Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997* as they pertain to sexual health programs.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.