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ADDITIONAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE FUNDING INFECTIOUS DISEASES CONTROL PROGRAM UPDATE

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, April 14, 2004, from the Commissioner of Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize the Health Services Department, Public Health Branch, to receive and expend 100% provincial funding in the amount of approximately \$566,370 for the period of April 1, 2004 through to December 31, 2004.
2. Regional Council authorize the Public Health Branch to hire 7.0 additional regular full-time FTEs pending written confirmation of ongoing 100% funding by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC).
3. The Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health be authorized to sign any Letter of Agreement with the MOHLTC that may be required.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek authorization for the receipt and expenditure of 100% provincial funding in the amount of \$566,370 for the purpose of hiring 7.0 additional regular full-time FTEs in the Infectious Diseases Control Division. The 7.0 additional FTEs will assist York Region in monitoring and controlling infectious diseases, as well as enhance The Region's ability to maintain business continuity during infectious disease outbreaks.

3. BACKGROUND

On May 28, 2003 the Provincial Government announced that approximately \$120 million would be invested annually for immediate health care improvements to respond to the "new normal" conditions. These measures included strengthening the Ontario public health system's ability to track infectious diseases and respond to related outbreaks through the deployment of rapid response teams. Provincial health units were allocated 180 additional FTEs to address these areas of concern. The distribution of the additional FTEs was based on the number hospital beds within each region and York Region Health Services was therefore awarded only 5.0 new FTEs on September 25, 2003, by the MOHLTC. If the allocation were based on population, York Region would have received 12.75 FTEs. Subsequently on December 19, 2003, the MOHLTC advised the

Public Health Branch that York Region had now been awarded 7.0 additional FTE positions rather than the original 5.0 FTE identified earlier in September.

At that time the MOHLTC also confirmed that the positions would be funded 100% until March 31, 2004 at which time the funding would revert back to a 50% cost-shared arrangement with the Region of York.

Through the 2004 budget process the additional FTEs related to this initiative were removed from the Public Health Business Plan and Budget as a result of the MOHLTC's lack of commitment to continue to fund these positions 100%.

On the March 26, 2004 (via teleconference) the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province announced that the MOHLTC would continue to provide 100% funding until further notice for the FTEs previously awarded to Health Units for the monitoring and control of infectious diseases.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

On December 19, 2003 the MOHLTC advised, through correspondence that York Region Health Services had been approved for 7.0 additional FTE to increase the health unit's ability to monitor and respond to infectious diseases including surges in activity related to outbreaks.

The Infectious Diseases Control Division has, therefore, identified the need for an additional 1.0 FTE Epidemiologist, 1.0 FTE Senior Public Health Inspector, 1.0 FTE Public Health Inspector, 2.0 FTE Public Health Manager, and 2.0 FTE Public Health Nurses. It should be noted that the additional two managers are required in order to reduce the staffing ratio to a reasonable level (from 1:17 to 1:12). This division, in particular, requires significant one-on-one consultation with staff due to the nature of the work and case follow-up.

It is recommended that, pending written confirmation by the MOHLTC of the ongoing 100% funding in the amount of approximately \$566,370, regular full-time staff be hired to fill the 7.0 FTE positions identified above. If, however, the Province does not continue to fund this initiative and associated FTEs, attempts will be made to accommodate staff in other program areas through attrition. If this is not possible, they will be laid off in accordance with Collective Agreements and other Regional policies.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The MOHLTC has verbally committed to 100% provincial funding for these positions until further notice. While this initiative is to be 100% provincially funded, costs related to corporate support for this program (i.e. human resources, legal, payroll/accounting) have not been included in the funding formula. The estimated cost for this support is

approximately \$95,300. Table 1 outlines the expenditures from April 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004 and also provides full annualization costs.

Table 1
Utilization of Additional Funding for the Infectious Diseases Control Program

	100% Funding April 1st to December 31, 2004
Salaries & Benefits	\$430,000
Mileage, Training	27,500
Program Costs/equipment	67,370
Accommodation, Computer Leases, etc.	41,500
Total 100% MOHLTC Funding	\$566,370
100% Regional Costs Not Covered	\$ 95,300

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The additional 7.0 FTES staffing resources allocated to infectious disease monitoring and tracking are essential to ensure that the health and safety of all residents in local municipalities are protected from future infectious disease outbreaks.

7. CONCLUSION

The additional staffing resources will enhance the Health Services Department's ability to deal with surges in activity related to outbreaks in diseases throughout York Region. It is recommended that, pending written confirmation from the MOHLTC, 7.0 additional regular fulltime FTEs be hired to work with the Infectious Diseases Control Division.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.