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CENTRAL LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORK FALLS PREVENTION HEALTH PROMOTION NETWORK PROPOSAL

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, August 25, 2008, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the Community and Health Services Department's participation in a collaborative seniors falls prevention project with other community partners and agencies entitled, "*A Comprehensive Falls Prevention Health Promotion Network for Collaborative Service Delivery, Community Capacity Building and Best Practice Knowledge Transfer*," which is funded by the Central Local Health Integration Network.
2. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute the necessary agreements on behalf of the Region with other community partners and agencies participating in this collaborative project.

2. PURPOSE

This report recommends the participation of the Community and Health Services Department in a collaborative project funded through the Central Local Health Integration Network (Central LHIN) that aims to prevent falls and promote health among seniors.

3. BACKGROUND

One in three seniors living in the community will fall at least once a year

The burden of injury from falls among seniors age 65 years of age and over is significant in Ontario. According to the Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre (2007), falls are the leading cause of injury for seniors. A senior enters the emergency room of a hospital for a fall-related injury every 10 minutes while every 30 minutes a senior is admitted to hospital for a fall-related injury. The Public Health Agency of Canada estimated that one in three seniors living in the community will fall at least once in a 12 month period. Of the 176,000 seniors living in the Central LHIN, approximately 58,666 will experience one or more falls per year.

Government of Ontario invests in *Aging at Home Strategy* to help seniors live healthy, independent lives in their own homes

In August 2007, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care launched the *Aging at Home Strategy* to help streamline, promote integration, and build community capacity of care and services for seniors. The aim is to ensure seniors have access to supports and services that will help them maintain independent living in their own homes for as long as possible. The Central LHIN received \$106.5 million over three years, as part of an overall \$700 million initiative led by the 14 LHINs in Ontario. The funds are dedicated to projects with innovative, integrated, preventive and wellness service approaches.

Letter of Intent submitted by York Region and community partners for a “Central LHIN Falls Prevention Health Promotion Network”

In December 2007, the Letter of Intent for a collaborative project entitled “Central LHIN Falls Prevention Health Promotion Network” was submitted by the Community and Health Services Department, COTA Health, Central Community Care Access Centre (Central CCAC), VHA Home HealthCare, Baycrest Centre, City of Toronto Public Health and York University. This collaboration consists of members from public health, academic institutions, and community agencies that coordinate and provide services such as personal care, homemaking, nursing and physical therapy to seniors. The network aims to integrate individual organization’s knowledge and scopes of services in maintaining and improving the health of seniors in a seamless way, especially in relation to falls prevention.

The Central CCAC will serve as the lead agency for this project and manage the Aging at Home Funding awarded to the project.

Proposal was approved, in principle, by the Central LHIN’s Board

The proposed collaborative project received approval, in principle, for funding for one year by the Central LHIN’s Board of Directors at the public board meeting on February 26, 2008. This proposed project has been included in the Central LHIN’s Aging at Home Detailed Service Plan.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

A falls prevention strategy that will promote and support seniors aging at home safely

The Central LHIN Falls Prevention Health Promotion Network will be created to improve access for seniors age 65 years and over to falls prevention programming that will promote and support frail seniors aging at home.

The goal of this collaborative project is to coordinate the system-wide integration and implementation of a falls prevention strategy across the Central LHIN by:

1. Engaging agencies to implement health promotion and falls prevention programming into existing service delivery approaches.
2. Building capacity/developing skills for existing service providers and other key stakeholders in falls prevention theory and exercise strategies to maintain and improve senior's mobility.
3. Implementing pilot health promotion and falls prevention programs in various settings to meet the diverse needs of seniors.
4. Conducting research, dissemination and knowledge translation led by York University, improving the ongoing best practice falls prevention programming and health outcomes for seniors.

The project will be managed and evaluated by a steering committee, with management representation from the seven partner organizations.

Public Health is mandated to promote health and increase the capacity of priority populations to prevent injury

This project aligns with the 1997 Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, which requires the Board of Health, in partnership with other health care providers and community groups, to support policies and educate seniors and other targeted groups to prevent fall-related injuries among seniors. This mandate is reinforced in the 2008 Revised (Draft) Ontario Public Health Standards, which requires the Board of Health to use a comprehensive health promotion approach to increase the capacity of priority populations to prevent injury by collaborating with community partners.

York Region Public Health Branch's teaching, enabling and advisory role

Regional staff from the Injury Prevention and Seniors Program will provide training to service providers in falls prevention theory, project protocol, and data collection. Staff will also build community capacity among the service provider organizations to develop and implement healthy policies in health promotion and injury prevention.

The establishment of the advisory committee requires the participation of Senior Management (or designate) of the Public Health Branch. In addition, the Manager of the Injury Prevention and Seniors Program will provide advice and share in decision-making as part of the interim steering committee.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project will be supported within current staffing levels

Costs associated with this proposed project will be accommodated within the existing Public Health Budget which includes 1.0 full-time Public Health Nurse in the Injury Prevention and Seniors Program. The participation of management staff in committee work will be a component of existing capacity building activities. This project will provide Public Health an opportunity to execute its mandated functions in an intense but short period of time that develops the capacity of community partners to sustain this initiative. Upon the completion of this project, staff resources will be shifted to focus on other areas of healthy living initiatives for seniors.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Seniors living within the Central LHIN boundary (which includes all of York Region with the exception of the south west portion of Vaughan) will have increased access to a falls prevention health promotion programming that will promote and support them aging at home safely through this proposed pilot project.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region has frequently developed and participated in innovative strategies to meet the needs of its citizens. Multi- agency and cross sector collaboration in this project targeted at falls prevention in the senior population will work towards continued achievement of this goal.

For more information on this report, please contact Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health at Ext. 4012.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.