

21

EMPLOYEE WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Finance and Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 15, 2006, from the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Region of York enter into a contract with Buffett Taylor & Associates Ltd. for the provision of workplace wellness consulting services for the York Region Employee Workplace Wellness Program.
2. The contract for services should commence on July 3, 2006 for a period of three years.

2. PURPOSE

The Region of York is dedicated to and supports the creation of a healthy workplace environment for its employees. The goal of the Employee Workplace Wellness Program is to provide comprehensive wellness programs, services and initiatives for all its active employees. Wellness is recognized as a vital component of organizational success and is an emerging trend in employee benefits provided by leading edge employers.

3. BACKGROUND

As a result of an Employee Satisfaction Survey administered in September 2003, a working group entitled "Workload, Impact of Job on Personal Life, Job Control" recommended the development of a comprehensive workplace wellness program for Regional employees to address areas of concern including: workload, stress and work and personal life balance. Accordingly, the Region initialized the development of a wellness program by hiring a Corporate Wellness Program Developer. The development of the Employee Workplace Wellness Program began with a variety of activities including research, benchmarking exercises and discussions with similar municipalities.

The Region of York is dedicated to and supports the creation of a healthy workplace environment for its employees. The goal of the Employee Workplace Wellness Program is to provide comprehensive wellness programs, services and initiatives for all its active employees. The Region has established an Employee Workplace Wellness Program Committee which consists of representatives from each department. The committee is chaired by the Region's Corporate Wellness Program Developer. This committee makes

recommendations regarding developing, implementing and evaluating wellness initiatives for employees.

In November 2005, services of an external agency were engaged to 1) analyse the Region's health and wellness data including prescription drug utilization, absenteeism, Employee Assistance Program use, Long Term and Short Term Disability statistics, and 2) implement a health risk appraisal (HRA) and wellness interest assessment for all active employees. The data gathered from these two initiatives served as the foundation from which the strategies for a comprehensive employee workplace wellness program were developed.

The HRA and Wellness Interest Assessment data was used to determine how to best meet the needs and interests of the employees and the organization. A request for proposal was issued on March 16, 2006 to engage a wellness consultant to provide comprehensive employee workplace wellness services. Submissions were received from four service providers. The submissions were reviewed and evaluated by members of the Employee Workplace Wellness Committee.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Representatives from the Employee Workplace Wellness Committee evaluated the proposals in a two-stage process, with Supplies and Services as facilitator of the process, according to the following criteria:

- Demonstrated Experience and Credentials
- Relevant experience on similar projects
- References
- Responsiveness and completeness of the submission
- Demonstrated understanding of Regional requirements
- Innovation of solution offered (value added)
- Ability to meet project timetable/deadlines
- Approach and methodology
- Price

Stage 1

The initial evaluation was conducted individually by the members of the evaluation committee.

Stage 2

The evaluation committee as a whole performed the secondary evaluation in order to arrive at a consensus based on the proposal documents submitted by the Proponents.

The results of the evaluation process were as follows:

Evaluation Summary

Firm	Total Score without Price	Total Score with Price	Total Price for Three Year Contract (including GST & PST)
Buffett Taylor and Associates Ltd.	54.0	73.5	\$230,751.00
AIM Health Group	34.0	42.5	\$530,310.00
Work-Life Harmony Enterprises	33.8	63.8	\$150,000.00
FGI World	41.0	*Incomplete Pricing	

Buffett Taylor & Associates Ltd. was able to showcase their experience and demonstrate their ability to provide the Region with comprehensive workplace wellness initiatives. They have provided a diverse array of wellness programs and services to many organizations in Canada since 1995. Included in their client roster for fully comprehensive wellness programs are the Regions of Waterloo and Durham, the Towns of Richmond Hill, Markham, Ajax and Oakville and the City of Thunder Bay. Buffett Taylor was recently recognized by the National Quality Institute as a recipient of the Canada Award of Excellence – Healthy Workplace.

As such, the evaluation committee feels very confident that Buffett Taylor and Associates strongly demonstrates the ability to perform the contract services outlined in the RFP document, P-06-30 Consulting Services for the Employee Workplace Wellness Program.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Provision of the Employee Workplace Wellness Program will be revenue neutral to the organization as it will be funded from the Long Term Disability (LTD) reserve fund.

A growing body of evidence indicate that workplace health programs are a crucial investment in an organization's long term success. Research has shown that the economic benefits of wellness programming provide a return on investment for the employer. Current Canadian data suggests that, for every dollar invested in workplace wellness, an organization can expect to realize a three dollar return over time. These savings can be realized through:

- Reduced absenteeism
- Lower short-term and long-term disability costs

- Improved employee morale and organizational culture
- Lower benefit costs
- Increased productivity

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Region's choice of a Wellness Consultant will have no impact on the local municipalities; however, it should be noted that Buffett Taylor & Associates Ltd. provides wellness consulting services for the Town of Richmond Hill and the Town of Markham, and representatives from both Towns recommended Buffett Taylor highly for the provision of wellness consulting services.

7. CONCLUSION

A healthy workplace contributes to staff well-being and higher productivity, which in turn benefits the constituents of the organization and those whom they are charged to serve. A workplace wellness program protects the most valuable organizational asset, the employee, by promoting the health and wellness of each individual. As such, a wellness program provides solutions to control growing costs that employers face. Research indicates that there are many financial benefits to implementing a healthy workplace program including cost savings in employee benefits plans. Workplace wellness programs benefit both employees and organizations.

The evaluation team is confident that Buffett Taylor & Associates Ltd. will provide successful, comprehensive workplace wellness initiatives to all Region of York employees. Based on Buffett Taylor's experience with similar municipalities, their recent work on analysing the Region's organizational health data and implementing a HRA and wellness interest assessment, the committee highly recommends Buffett Taylor & Associates Ltd. to provide wellness consulting services for Regional employees. Engaging Buffett Taylor & Associates Ltd. in this capacity recognizes the importance of employee health and wellness and demonstrates the commitment of the Region as a leading edge employer.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.