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2007 LONG TERM CARE FUNDING INCREASES

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, November 15, 2007, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve receipt and expenditure of one-time funding from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) in the amounts of \$33,119 for implementation of late career nursing retention strategies and \$27,500 for participation in the Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care pilot project.
2. Regional Council approve receipt and expenditure of a MOHLTC increase in the funding envelope for raw food for LTC facilities in the amount of \$40,364 (\$121,092 annualized).
3. Staff be authorized to sign any Agreements with the MOHLTC and the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) that may be required to implement the above.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to secure approval from Regional Council for the receipt and expenditure of additional subsidy from the MOHLTC for program costs related to the implementation of late career nursing retention strategies in the Long Term Care and Seniors Branch, per diem funding for raw food, and funding to implement the Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care initiative in the LTC centres.

3. BACKGROUND

The Long Term Care and Seniors Branch has recently been advised of additional MOHLTC funding related to the following Ministry initiatives:

- Nursing Retention Strategies for Late Career Nurses
- Early adopter funding for a new MOHLTC information management project—Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care
- Per diem funding for raw food

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Additional funding approved for Nursing Retention Strategy

The MOHLTC introduced a number of Health Human Resource Nursing Strategies to assist in the recruitment and retention of nurses in the province. One of the strategies is called the Late Career Initiative and it is designed to support nurses in hospitals and long term care that are in the latter part of their career. The 2007–2008 provincial budget dedicated funding for this program, which is accessed by application from eligible employers. Funding is provided to employers to enable them to allocate a portion of the scheduled hours of work, for nurses who are over the age of 55, to projects that are less physically demanding. The goal of this initiative is to encourage over age 55 nurses, who might otherwise consider early retirement because of the physically-demanding nature of their jobs, to continue working.

The Long Term Care and Seniors Branch applied for and was granted approval to support 12 nurses working in the branch that meet the criteria for support under this initiative. The nurses will work on a range of projects that will include emergency preparedness, pandemic influenza planning, patient/resident education, eHealth policies, patient/client safety initiatives, documentation policies and staff education. Their positions will be back-filled by casual and/or part-time staff and as a result there are no FTE implications associated with this initiative.

The funding provided to the Long Term Care and Seniors Branch under this initiative is \$33,119.

4.2 Ministry provides funds Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care Project

The MOHLTC introduced a new initiative called the Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care Project as part of the government's broader Information Management and eHealth Strategy.

The objectives of the Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care Project are:

- To improve the quality of care through high-quality information about health outcomes
- To enable the measurement of the impact that nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists have on health outcomes, in a variety of care settings
- To provide clinicians and health care organizations with the tools they need to facilitate the standardized collection of this data.
- To make the contribution of the identified clinicians visible and measurable at the health system level
- To provide health care managers with information to assist them in making decisions related to quality improvement and benchmarking for quality care

There is significant potential for patients, clients, residents, health care professionals, planners, managers and researchers to benefit and gain from this initiative.

The Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care Project Co-ordinator for the Central LHIN asked the Newmarket and Maple Health Centres to be among the pilot sites for the introduction of the project in LTC facilities. The Ministry will provide 100% funding associated with the staff training costs and with the additional portable computers needed to support the bed-side nursing assessment process. A subsidy request has been submitted to the Ministry for an additional \$27,500 in provincial funding related to implementing this initiative (\$12,561 for staff training and \$14,907 for portable computers). Participation will be conditional on approval and full funding by the MOHLTC.

4.3 York LTC facilities received increased funding for the purchase of raw food

The Provincial Long Term Care Association, the Dietitians Association of Canada and various consumer groups have been lobbying the provincial government for an increase in the funding provided for food for LTC residents. The current per diem which was \$5.57/resident/day is considered inadequate and many operators have had to redirect funds in order to provide a more satisfactory level of service.

On July 30, 2007, the MOHLTC announced that funding for raw food for LTC facilities is to be increased from \$5.57/day to \$7.00/day effective September 1, 2007. For the Long Term Care and Seniors Branch this represents an increase in Ministry funding of \$1.43/bed/day or \$40,364 for the balance of 2007 (\$121,092 annualized).

Currently, \$6.12/bed/day is budgeted for food, of which the Region contributes \$0.55/bed/day. The funding increase will, therefore, result in the elimination of the municipal contribution and a corresponding reduction in net tax levy in the amount of \$15,524 in 2007 (\$46,574 annualized).

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Long Term Care and Seniors Branch will receive an additional \$86,317 from the MOHLTC in 2007 and \$135,532 in 2008. With the increase in MOHLTC funding, the municipal contribution is eliminated and the net tax levy will drop by \$15,524 in 2007 and \$46,574 annually. The following chart depicts the current year, 2008 and annualized program funding increases.

Table 1
Summary of Funding Increases

Program	Current Year \$ Increase	2008 \$ Increase	Annualized \$ Increase
Nursing Retention Strategy	\$18,679	\$ 14,440	0
Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care Initiative	27,500	0	0
Subtotal One-Time Funding	\$46,179	\$ 14,440	0
Food Per Diem	40,364	121,092	\$121,092
Total Funding	\$86,543	\$135,532	\$121,092
Reduction in Tax Levy Contribution from Region	(\$15,524)	(\$ 46,574)	-

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The utilization of the MOHLTC funding will allow the Long Term Care and Seniors Branch to continue to meet the needs of clients with greater service needs, assist in the provision of quality services and will facilitate retention of late career nurses which will benefit and support the programs and services we provide for all citizens needing/using our services in York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

Approval of the recommendations for the receipt and expenditure of the additional subsidy from the Province of Ontario will enable the Long Term Care and Seniors Branch to provide funding to facilitate retention of late career nurses, enhance dietary services for clients and improve the quality of care through the implementation of the Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care initiative.

For more information on this report, contact Shawn Turner, General Manager, Long Term Care and Seniors Branch of the Community and Health Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.