



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

**CITY WIDE  
IMPLICATIONS**

<b>To:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee		
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<b>Date:</b>	October 6, 2008		
<b>Re:</b>	<b>Update on Hostels to Homes Pilot (ECS08047) (City Wide)</b>		

## Information:

In May 2007, the City of Hamilton launched the provincially directed Hostels to Homes (H2H) Pilot, a collaborative effort with existing emergency hostels to reinvest community resources to support chronic hostel residents as they move along the housing continuum. Through this initial phase of the Pilot, Hamilton had the capacity to help 80 individuals on Ontario Works (OW) find safe, affordable housing and to provide them with the supports necessary to sustain that housing. In July 2008, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) approved Phase 2, which will enable Hamilton to house and provide supports to another 40 individuals.

Key features of Hamilton's H2H Pilot are the creation of an Integrated Mobile Case Management Team (IMCMT) that provides 24/7 mobile support, housing placement, access to appropriate employment supports and linkages to community based services. This innovative program provides the necessary supports to assist each participant in working towards and achieving their personal goals. Community workers and emergency hostel staff work collaboratively to engage potential participants, build therapeutic relationships, assist them in accessing appropriate housing and to provide 24/7 support. Support takes place in participants' homes and in the community. Of note, the 24/7 support is available not only to participants but to landlords as well. The City of Hamilton is using the Housing Allowance Program (HAP) to access a range of housing options across the City in order to meet the individual needs of the participants.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The MCSS hired, Goss Gilroy Inc. to conduct a provincial evaluation in the six participating municipalities across Ontario. A local evaluation has been developed for the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of Hamilton's Pilot in providing opportunities for chronic hostel residents to access and maintain safe, affordable and stable housing. A cost benefit analysis will also be prepared. Support for the local evaluation is being provided by the City of Hamilton's Social Development Team and coordinated by the H2H Pilot Project Manager. Results of the MCSS evaluation will be reported to the Emergency and Community Services Committee when available.

### **Current Status**

#### ***Phase 1***

- Over 400 individuals engaged since May 31, 2007;
- 82 individuals housed currently;
- One year prior to becoming housed with H2H, hostel use by Phase 1 H2H participants exceeded 13,450 nights;
- Participants are housed in 32 different buildings across the City;
- Participants have experienced the following successes:
  - Over 60 participants have engaged in various employment activities (as defined by OW) including returns to school and accessing of various addictions services;
  - Three participants have had some full-time employment; nine participants have had some part-time employment;
  - 54 participants with no Family Physician have accessed the H2H Health Clinic;
  - Many participants have secured dentures, eye glasses and identification;
  - Three participants have transitioned to ODSP and 11 participants are currently in the process of completing ODSP applications;
  - Many individuals have reconnected with children and other family members; and,
  - Many participants are experiencing shorter incarcerations and/or completion of probationary orders.
- The 24/7 supports offered, including after-hours and weekend on-call service, have resulted in over 500 calls from participants or from landlords or other service providers (i.e. hospitals, probation and parole, hostels, etc.) on behalf of or regarding participants; and,
- In response to the significant number of reports from participants around loneliness, isolation and boredom upon being housed, H2H launched a weekly drop-in group. Since its launch (the week of February 27, 2008), weekly group attendance has averaged 20 - 25 % of H2H participants. This group is currently being co-facilitated by the H2H Addiction Case Worker and two H2H OW Case Managers. Some participants have expressed interest in taking a lead in facilitating this group in the future. Mentoring and support will be offered to these individuals with the goal of having these individuals take ownership for the group over the year ahead. A formal Community Participation (CP) placement is being developed in conjunction with OW Employment Services, which will allow CP funds to be made available for those

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participants who take on a peer support/group facilitation role or a kitchen and meal preparation role within this group.

**Phase 2**

- Ramp-up is currently underway including an increase of the staff complement;
- Two individuals housed currently;
- One year prior to becoming housed with H2H, hostel use by Phase 2 H2H participants exceeded 350 nights; and,
- It is anticipated that all 40 Phase 2 participants will be housed by the end of January 2009.

**Financial/Staffing/Other Implications**

MCSS provided \$82,760 to fund initial project start-up costs (i.e. staffing, equipment and client engagement activities). While the City of Hamilton expected this initiative to be cost neutral in 2007, savings were in fact generated.

On average, the City spends \$1,343 per resident per month to house an individual in a shelter under the Hostel Program. As participants are engaged in the Pilot and move to transitional or long-term housing, they are funded under the OW program. Participants are eligible for a maximum of \$560 in OW client benefits per month. The \$783 cost savings in the hostel program is reallocated to fund the Pilot.

Participants of Phase 1 are entitled to 18 months of support from the time that they become housed with H2H. Participants of Phase 2 will receive support until March 31, 2010, at which time the Pilot comes to an end.

**Next Steps**

Based on the interim report, staff are advocating for ongoing supports beyond 18 months. Given the findings to date, it is very clear that those individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness require supports beyond the limited 18-month timeframe of the Pilot.

Staff is currently working with hostel operators and other service providers who serve Hamilton's homeless population in a review of hostel services and services for the homeless. *A Homelessness Blueprint for Emergency Hostel Services* has been prepared which makes a number of recommendations including a framework of service delivery that is in keeping with the model of service delivery implemented with the H2H Pilot. If approved, a framework would exist which would facilitate the continuation of supports for Hamilton's chronic hostel residents upon securing housing in the community.

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