SUBJECT: Homemakers and Nursing Services Program Update (HCS03012(c)) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) Council support the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care in transferring their 80% portion of the City’s Homemakers and Nurses Services Program funding to an appropriate community agency. Net levy savings will be reflected in the 2006 budget process.

(b) Council direct staff to work with the local office of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Community Care Access Care during the transition/termination of homemaking services targeted for April 1, 2006.

(c) Council approve an immediate freeze on new referrals.

Joe-Anne Priel
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In April 2004, Council approved a delay in terminating the Homemakers and Nurses Services Program until such time that an appropriate solution was reached with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC). The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care recently committed through a Request for Interest (RFI) to transfer their financial contribution for homemaking services to a Community Social Service Agency. It is the intention of the MOHLTC to maintain service to the current client caseload. MOHLTC request for interest recommendations will be forwarded to the Minister’s office for final approval and sign off. Timelines have yet to be confirmed however the MOHLTC
is recommending the transfer begin April 1, 2006. Once the transition is complete, this funding will transfer from a discretionary program under the Homemakers and Nursing Services Act to an approved program under the MOHLTC Community Health Division 09B Home Help/Homemaking services (Paid).

The budget for the homemaking program is capped at $1,792,610 gross, $358,520 net. In 2005, hydro funds covered the City’s portion until June 30, 2005 at $179,350. The remainder of the year is funded by the City levy at $179,170. Projections indicate that continued growth in new referrals will exceed current allocations and staff are therefore recommending an immediate freeze on new referrals to ensure services are maintained within current budget allocations.

The City has purchase of service agreements with five local agencies that provide homemaking services to 705 eligible clients. The Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) continues to be a first contact for home support services and is the sole referral source for city homemaking services.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Hamilton has managed the Homemakers and Nurses Services program for more than 25 years. The majority of municipalities withdrew from the provision of these services when the CCACs were implemented across the province in 1997.

The CCAC use functional assessment tools to determine an individuals need for supports such as personal care, occupational therapy, nursing, social work, physiotherapy etc. If an individual is in need of homemaking supports the CCAC Case Managers forward referrals to the City who then complete a financial application as mandated under the Homemakers and Nurses Services Act. The CCAC sends approximately 60 referrals each month and of that number approximately 40 are financially eligible for the program. City staff continue to work with the CCAC and local office of the MOHLTC to identify and plan for the homemaking clients. A recent case review demonstrated that approximately 320 of the 705 active cases are receiving services provided by the CCAC in addition to City homemaking.

In July 2005, the MOHLTC agreed to transfer 1.4 million of provincial funds allocated to the Homemaking Program to an existing Hamilton Community Support Service agency to administer and manage Homemaking services for low-income persons and their families. Through a Request for Interest process, the Regional office of the MOHLTC will evaluate proposals against established criteria and make a recommendation to the Minister for approval of a community agency that will assume responsibility for homemaking services that currently support the City’s clients. City staff will continue to work with the MOHLTC through the transition process to ensure all clients be served through the new agency. Although it is the intention of the MOHLTC to provide funding for service to all current clients, these negotiations will occur with the new agency.
ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

During the transition phase, City staff will review each client file to ensure financial information is up to date as detailed in the Homemakers and Nurses Services Act and will make best recommendations for home help/homemaking services based on individual client need and circumstance. The existing budget cannot sustain the continued growth in referrals therefore an immediate freeze is required to maintain current service levels within the allocated budget.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

(a) Council approve the transition/termination of homemaking services and withdraw the 20% cost share with a target date of April 1, 2006. Council direct staff to implement an immediate freeze on new referrals and notify current service providers under the Purchase of Service Contract.

(b) Council not approve the transition/termination of homemaking services and direct staff to maintain current caseload within allocated budget. The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care will be notified of this decision and the City’s cost share obligation would continue.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:
As of July 1, 2005, the City’s 20% cost share of this program is currently being funded from the net levy. If the transition/termination is approved, there will be an annual savings of $358,520 for the City. The City has purchase of service contracts with five service providers. Three of the five service providers have contracts for homemaking / personal care services with the CCAC and should therefore not be impacted in this transition. We understand that one of the two remaining service providers is competing through the MOHLTC request for interest and the other is in process of completing a request for proposal with Haldimand Norfolk Social Services for the provision of homemaking services.

Staffing Implications
There are 3.5 FTE staff allocated to the program that will be impacted with the transfer of this funding to a community agency. Staff will seek direction from Human Resources to ensure appropriate actions are implemented.

Legal Implications:
As detailed in the Purchase of Service Contract, the City must provide 60 day written notification of the termination of services without cause to the current service providers. Staff will consult with Legal Services to ensure all contractual clauses are adhered to.

All clients will be given 60 days prior notice to provide support for this transition.
POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

The City of Hamilton's Homemakers and Nurses Services Program is legislated under the Homemakers and Nurses Services Act. This discretionary program is targeted to financially eligible residents in need of basic homemaking services.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

City staff continue to meet with the local office of the MOHLTC and staff of the CCAC to ensure that services are provided in a fair, consistent, equitable manner. City staff have provided ongoing communication updates to the current service providers and will develop a transition plan that recommends best understanding of current need and circumstance of each client.

Upon council approval, staff will immediately seek direction from both Human Resources and Legal Services and consult as needed during the transition period.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Public services and programs are delivered in an equitable manner, coordinated, efficient, effective and easily accessible to all citizens.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Human health and safety are protected.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Through a levy savings.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

☑ Yes ☐ No
Yes, Hamilton's citizens will continue to benefit from home support services.

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☐ Yes ☑ No
Not Applicable.