

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Katherine Chislett
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Date: November 3, 2020

Re: Social Service Response to COVID-19 Global Pandemic – November Update

This memorandum provides an update to the Social Service Response report brought forward to Committee of the Whole in [April 2020](#) and the update memos brought forward in [May 2020](#), [June 2020](#), [July 2020](#) and [September 2020](#). It identifies any new trends and issues, highlights key changes to federal and provincial supports, updates on actions as York Region moves into modified Stage Two provincial opening and notes resource considerations in response to the current pandemic surge. Information from Paramedic and Seniors Services not otherwise included in regular updates to Council by the Medical Officer of Health is included in this memo.

Key changes to Regional services since the September 2020 update memo include the following, with details outlined in this memo's content:

- The move to modified Stage 2 provincial opening has increased calls to Access York to the highest level since the start of the pandemic, with health-related concerns the largest category of resident inquiries
- Child care fee subsidy support has resumed for families living with low income to access licensed child care along with the reopening of child care centres. EarlyON agencies are operating virtually and 15 programs (both indoor and outdoor locations) were underway prior to the Region's return to Stage 2 when new limits on the numbers of participants were announced
- Clients of Leeder Place Family Shelter will be moving back into the shelter as a result of the relocation of the Self-Isolation Shelter

- The York Region Cold Weather Response Plan for 2020 for people experiencing homelessness is being finalized. Details about York Region seasonal shelters are attached to this memo
- The federal government continues to provide income supports, which have helped reduce demand for social assistance that might have otherwise occurred. Ontario Works clients with income earnings decreased dramatically since March, however, since June, earnings are slowly beginning to increase
- Province enacted law to freeze rents at 2020 levels for most tenancies in 2021, including residents living in community housing and those receiving rent-geared to income
- 911 call volumes for Paramedic Services have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels
- Paramedics are participating in the Universal Influenza Immunization Program by providing flu shots for vulnerable populations, first responders and health care providers
- The Region's two long-term care homes have adjusted protocols for visitors and for resident absences as required by the Province

Community needs continue to evolve as residents respond to modified Stage Two provincial opening and second wave of the pandemic

As York Region communities continue to adapt to modified Stage Two provincial opening, they face new challenges including impacts of the emerging second wave of the pandemic, end of the provincial moratorium on evictions and end of some COVID-19 supportive benefits such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). At the same time, government programs are evolving and adapting to ensure vulnerable populations are supported. As CERB ended, new federal income supports were introduced; as the provincial moratorium on evictions ended, a new rent freeze law was introduced. All levels of government continue to try to be responsive and nimble to ongoing pandemic needs.

Community needs are reflected in the types of resident calls to information lines. On the wave of a growing number of COVID-19 cases in Ontario, health-related concerns were the top category of the resident inquiries to Access York and 211 FindHelp.

For Access York, the overall call volume increased from 11,290 inquiries in August to 14,934 inquiries in September, an increase of 32%.

- The highest number of calls were about health topics, due primarily to reopening of schools and distribution of reusable face masks to low income households. Health topic calls to Access York jumped from 25% of all calls in August (2,768 inquiries) to 41% of all calls in September 2020 (6,117 inquiries). For comparison, in September 2019 there were 1,124 inquiries (12% of all calls)

- Second highest were calls related to social assistance. Although the proportionate share decreased from 26% of all calls in August (2,911 inquiries) to 21% of all calls in September (3,098 inquiries), the actual number of inquiries increased slightly. For comparison, in September 2019 there were 2,872 inquiries (31% of all calls)
- Although the proportion of calls related to housing declined from 13% of all calls in August (1,504 inquiries) to 10% of all calls in September (1,477), Housing remains one of the top community concerns. Most calls were related to the recent launch of several new rent subsidy programs and applicants wanting to update their housing application. For comparison, in September 2019, there were 934 housing-related inquiries (10% of all calls)

Calls to 211 FindHelp show similar trends with health-related needs being the top category in August and September 2020 (74 inquiries, or 16%). Needs related to housing and mental health followed closely at 13%. Staff continues to monitor and respond to current and emerging trends, as well as engage key tables and stakeholders to receive input and best support needs of the community as impacts of the pandemic continue.

Agencies prepared for second wave by adjusting the way they deliver their services

In [September 2020](#), the Human Services Planning Board of York Region had a strategic discussion about COVID-19 response, recovery and trends in human services. Board members indicated the continuing need for food, shelter, health, childcare and transportation for vulnerable populations, and the need to address this through continued coordination and collaboration across York Region service providers. The discussion by the Human Services Planning Board of York Region aligns with data trends and issues identified at other collaborative tables, which have been informing Regional actions and partnerships during this pandemic.

Sustainability of the non-profit and charitable sector in the face of COVID-19 remains an issue

As an update to the June 2020 memo, the non-profit and charitable sector continues to experience increased demand for services while facing significant financial hardship due to reduced revenues, fundraising limitations, declining donations and new costs for personal protective equipment and technology to support both program delivery and staff work-from-home arrangements. The sector is concerned an increasing number of organizations will be forced to close without further funding and support from senior levels of government.

In response, the Province announced [\\$83 million in one-time grants of up to \\$150,000 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) to support eligible non-profit organizations. The sector continues to advocate for further supports including a \$10 billion emergency stabilization fund from the federal government and a \$680 million provincial stabilization fund for Ontario's non-profit and charitable organizations.

Federal and provincial governments continue to announce new supports

Attachment 1 outlines announcements made by the federal and provincial governments on financial and social supports since the September 2020 update.

York Region continues to develop and implement actions as part of its social service response to COVID-19 and emerging second wave of the pandemic

Innovative Children's Services

- As of September 1, 2020, child care centres were permitted to return to full licensed capacity while maintaining health and safety protocols. As of October 27, 2020, 532 child care centres were open out of a possible 546 licensed centres (or 97%), however, vacancies are higher than pre-COVID levels (on average, about 66%), challenging the financial sustainability of these businesses
- Child care fee subsidy support has resumed. As of October 15, 2020, there were 462 families that were in immediate need on the priority child care fee subsidy waitlist, up from 227 families last October. Staff has reviewed and updated existing child care fee subsidy eligibility and waitlist policies such as updating the low income threshold to include family size in the eligibility assessment
- Inclusion Support Services continue to support the return and inclusion of children with special needs in child care. Most services are provided virtually and procedures have been developed to support in-person visits when necessary
- Infant Child Development Services has successfully pivoted to virtual services. A recent survey showed that program outcomes continued to be met:
 - 96% of the 248 respondents indicated an improved understanding of their child's development
 - 96% agreed they were better able to help their child participate in aspects of daily life
 - 94% agreed they had better knowledge of community resources for their child and family
 - Only 7% of respondents said that they did not find virtual visits helpful

Work is underway on a hybrid model that would add some level of in-person home visiting to enhance support to those children most in need.

- Beginning September 1, 2020, EarlyON agencies were permitted to reopen in-person programming, under new health and safety requirements. In October, 15 programs (indoor and outdoor locations) were operating, out of the 70 programs in the Region prior

to the first wave of COVID-19. When York Region moved to modified Stage Two (October 19, 2020), EarlyON indoor programs were limited to a maximum of 10 people inside at any point in time. Agencies are working together to determine how to offer programs under the new maximum capacity limit

- In partnership with the Children's Treatment Network, in-person specialty Occupational and Physiotherapy clinics for children have reopened. The Spasticity Management Clinic, Feeding Assessment and Consultation Clinic and the Neuromotor Clinic are now conducting both in-person and virtual visits. In September, there were 13 children served through the Spasticity Management Clinic, four through the Feeding Assessment and Consultation Clinic, and eight through the Neuromotor Clinic. With the addition of virtual visits, the number of children seen at the Spasticity Management and Neuromotor Clinics has increased in comparison to September 2019, when the number of children served by these clinics was seven, six and five, respectively
- From May 5 to June 19, 2020, McMaster University conducted The Ontario Parent Survey. The survey found that the pandemic is impacting children and their caregivers:
 - 57% of caregivers met the criteria for depression
 - 30% reported moderate or high levels of anxiety
 - 40% reported deterioration in their child's behaviour or mood

Enhanced Housing and Homelessness Supports

- The Self-Isolation Shelter provides a safe place and supports for people experiencing homelessness to isolate while they are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or are confirmed positive and have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic. As of October 26, 2020, the site has helped York Region hospitals support 36 clients during the 28 weeks it has been in operation. Operations at the Self-Isolation Shelter will shortly be relocated from Leeder Place Family Shelter in the Town of East Gwillimbury so that the families can return to the shelter from the Best Western Hotel in the Town of Newmarket. The new self-isolation shelter location will be announced soon
- Transitional Shelter operations at the Kingbridge Conference Centre and Hotel continues to provide a place to safely self-isolate for up to 14 days. Between May 13, 2020, when the shelter opened and October 26, 2020, the site has almost continuously been at full capacity (50 rooms), supporting a total of 405 clients of whom 254 (63%) had no previous reported homeless shelter stays and were accessing services for the first time; 147 clients have secured new permanent housing, and of those, 57 have been reunited and housed with family and friends

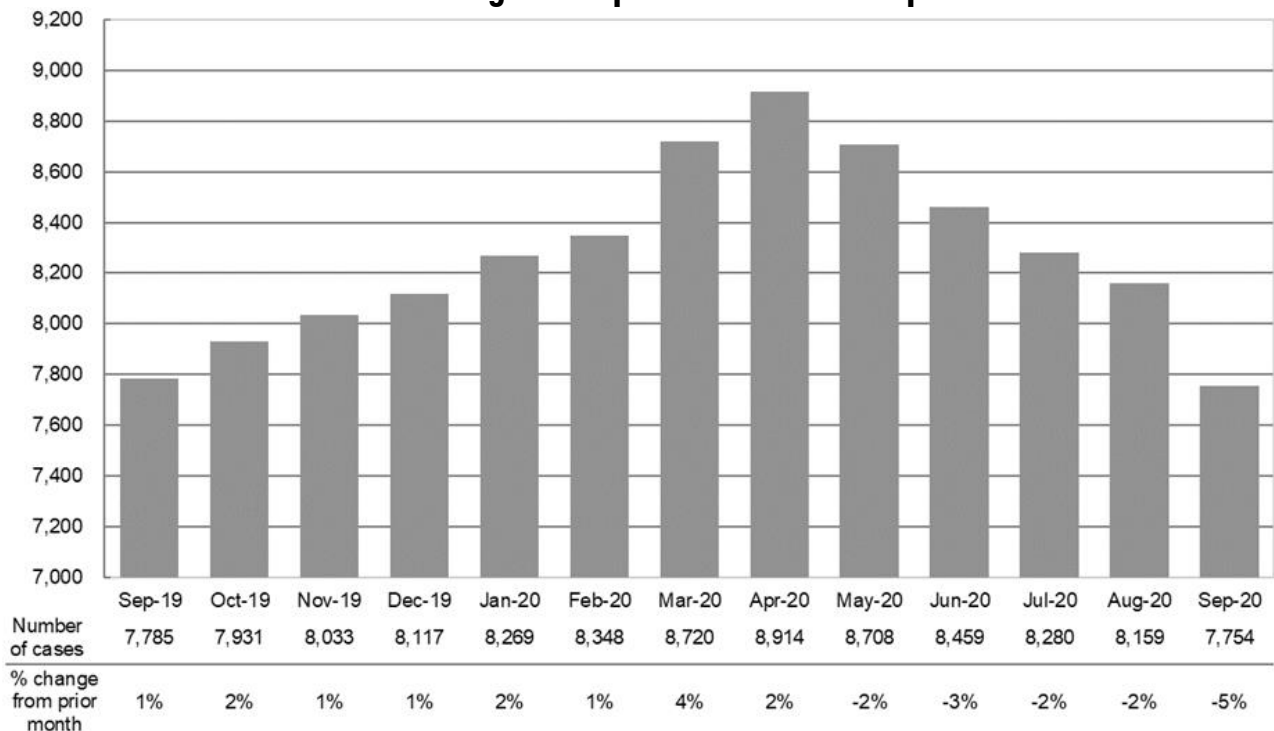
- The Cold Weather Response Plan is being updated to align with the latest Public Health Congregate Living Guidelines. Information about the 2020 Plan is provided later in this memo
- The COVID-19 In-Situ Program provides relief to market rent households in community housing who have experienced a COVID-19 related income loss. To date, 15 households have received a short-term rent benefit to help prevent housing loss. The Region also continues to offer the Short Term Assistance for Renters program, which provides a 24-month rent benefit and 30 months of support services to renters in the private market who experience a temporary job loss and need help maintaining housing
- Through Housing Services' wellness checks, between March and September, staff contacted 363 seniors and completed 247 checks with seniors living in 12 community housing locations and provided referrals to programs

Escalated Social Assistance and Income Supports

- Ontario Works staff continues to provide critical supports to clients virtually while the Ontario Works offices remain closed to the public. As new benefits become available, staff will discuss these and any other financial resources from the federal or provincial governments that clients may be able to access
- The temporary emergency discretionary benefit for eligible Ontario Works clients ended July 31, 2020. With this benefit ending, staff has seen a steady increase in need for food vouchers which is being funded through the Social Services Relief Fund. Since April 2020, there have been 242 food voucher issuances (as of October 23, 2020), of which 114 (47%) were issued after the emergency benefit ended
- On September 30, 2020, the Provincial Government announced the first phase of the social assistance recovery and renewal plan which aims to build a more responsive, efficient and person-centred social assistance system to get people back to work. The focus will be on improving access to employment and training services, developing new digital tools and modern service options, and processing financial assistance faster. The recovery and renewal plan builds upon what provinces and municipalities have learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and will begin to roll-out over the next few months. York Region has been selected as one of the seven prototype locations to explore a new intake process for Ontario Works which is scheduled to launch on October 30, 2020
- Staff has managed the steady increase in the Ontario Works caseload, largely through efficiencies from providing services virtually instead of in-person. In September 2019, there were 7,785 clients, increasing to a peak of 8,914 clients in April 2020 (a 14.5% increase). From April to August 2020 there has been a decline of about 2% monthly. From August to September 2020 the caseload declined by 5% and there were 7,754 clients (see Figure 1). This is approximately the same number of clients that were on the caseload in September 2019 (7,785 clients). The decline was primarily due to

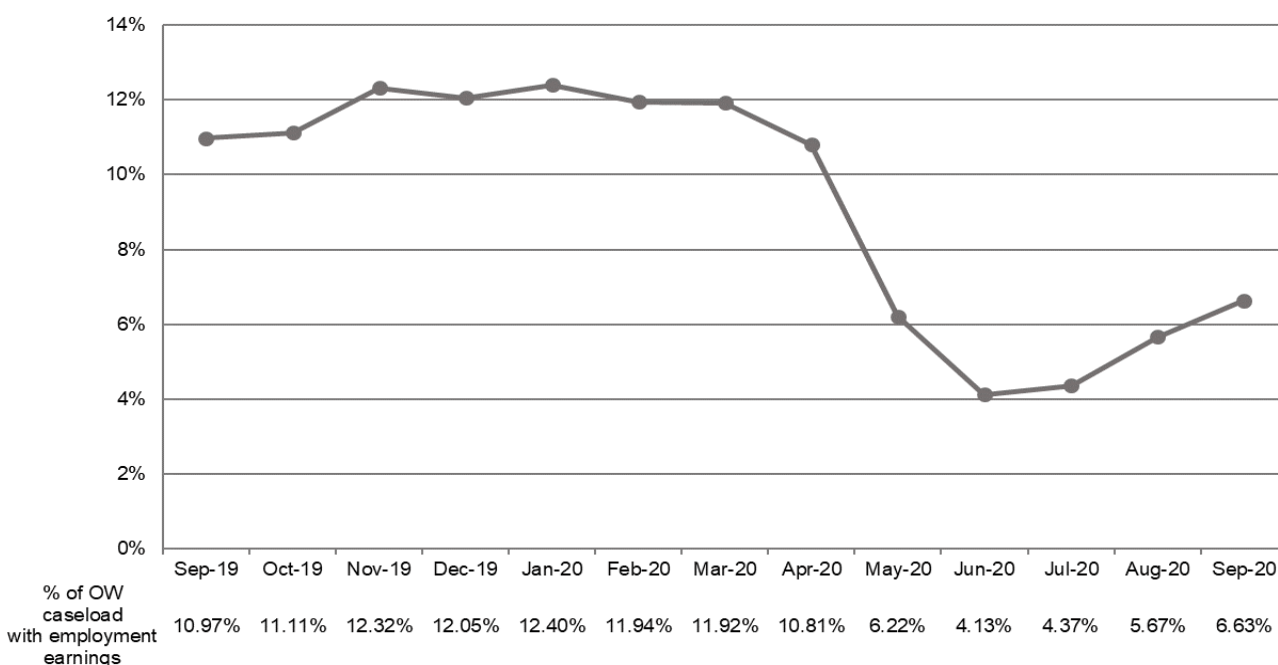
introduction of CERB by the federal government in March, as Ontario Works clients are required to pursue all sources of income available to them, which would include any federal or provincial supports. With the end of CERB in October, staff anticipates a surge of Ontario Works applications; because of the differences in eligibility between the new federal recovery benefit compared to CERB, some people may no longer qualify for federal funds. Ontario Works continues to be the one stable of financial support for people when they have exhausted all other benefits; it can be issued while someone is waiting to receive federal benefits

Figure 1
Ontario Works Caseload Changes – September 2019 to September 2020



- Ontario Works clients are permitted by the province to earn up to \$200 before benefit payments are reduced. From April to June 2020, the proportion of the caseload with employment earnings decreased significantly from 10.8% to 4.1%, indicating job losses and reduced work hours. Since June 2020, this number has been increasing (see Figure 2). This uptrend may be associated with staff supporting clients in addressing the barriers they face to employment and continuing to make progress towards life stability and employment during the pandemic

Figure 2
Ontario Works: Percentage of Ontario Works Caseload with Employment Earnings



- The Ontario Works Family Support team assists clients with financial literacy and decision-making, budgeting and tax filing. During the pandemic this team quickly began to provide these services virtually to clients. Between April 21, 2020 and October 21, 2020, assistance to clients with their tax returns is expected to result in 185 clients receiving \$1.37 million in tax refunds and benefits, reducing their need for income supports and helping them towards financial independence

Rent arrears remain an area of focus for community housing providers including Housing York Inc.

The Region continues to monitor community housing provider arrears resulting from residents not paying rent, including arrears owed by Housing York Inc. residents. Housing York Inc. reports the number of households owing rent arrears increased slightly from 186 in August to 194 in September, with total arrears owing increasing from \$173,000 to \$188,000. Arrears data provided by non-profits and co-operatives indicates they experienced an increase in arrears comparable to Housing York Inc. between March 2020 and September 2020, with a slight decline in the month of August. A slight arrears increase in the month of September is typical in community housing, as families are incurring costs related to back to school.

As communicated to Council in [September 2020](#), gradual re-opening of the Landlord and Tenant Board began in August, including scheduling of hearings from non-payment of rent. Housing providers are required to use Landlord and Tenant Board processes to ensure tenants and members pay their rent. The Region continues to work with housing providers to help

tenants and members whose incomes have been affected by the pandemic to pay rent and maintain their housing.

Provincial legislation to freeze residential rents in 2021 should provide most renters in York Region with relief, but represents financial pressure on housing providers and the Region as Service Manager

The *Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, 2020*, enacted October 1, 2020, amended the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* to freeze rents at 2020 levels for most tenancies in 2021, including new rental residential units previously exempt from *Residential Tenancies Act* rent rules. Rent increases will be permitted under limited circumstances, such as cases where landlords and tenants agree on rent increases for specific capital expenses or provision of additional services.

Although regulations have not yet been developed, it appears this freeze will impact most residents living in community housing, including households receiving rent-geared-to-income. Typically, housing providers adjust rents for subsidized households based on changes in household income. Under the rent freeze, rent-geared-to-income households who experience a decrease in income will have their rents decreased, but housing providers are not permitted to increase rents if the household's income increases.

The rent freeze may create financial pressure for the Region due to increased subsidy costs and increases in housing provider operating expenses. As Service Manager, the Region is responsible for subsidizing the cost of community housing units as mandated by a provincial funding formula. The Region may have increased subsidy costs to cover increased operating costs for housing providers. As reported to Council [October 22, 2020](#), staff is working with the province, other Service Managers, and housing providers to understand the full impact of the rent freeze on the community housing sector and will report back to Council on budget impact as needed.

Region continues to leverage the Community Investment Fund to support local agencies and help vulnerable residents respond to COVID-19 needs

Through the program, the Region targets gaps in community needs and invests in preventative, early-intervention initiatives that improve the overall health of residents living with low to moderate income, and divert vulnerable populations from needing to access more costly services like social assistance and homelessness programs. The Community Investment Fund is an important component of York Region's human services delivery system and continues to play a critical role in the Region's social services response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of pandemic response, staff has been working with agencies to adjust Community Investment projects to safely continue delivery of services and meet emerging needs. In addition, any available program funding in 2020 not needed by agencies due to changes in project delivery (such as cost savings resulting from the change from in-person to remote services delivery) is being redirected to more critical needs. This quarter, approximately

\$143,000 in funding has been redirected to 15 agencies to support enhancements such as expanded mental health programming, technology needs, and Personal Protective Equipment purchases.

In [October 2020](#), Council approved the approach for flowing and managing Community Investment funding in 2021. Subject to 2021 budget approval, approximately \$5.8 million has been allocated for 42 projects and initiatives to support York Region's not-for-profit sector and help address service gaps. Funding for these projects will help stabilize the human services sector and ensure continued support for local initiatives that vulnerable residents rely on, particularly during the pandemic and as federal and provincial temporary supports end. There will also be flexibility to direct and flow unallocated internal and external funding through the program, for eligible priority social service projects and initiatives. This approach will help the Region continue to nimbly and effectively respond to new and emerging community needs and will be an important mechanism to help navigate the uncertainty associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Vulnerable people experiencing homelessness will have access to additional safe shelter spaces during the cold weather months

While intensive supports are being provided to move as many people experiencing homelessness into more stable housing options as expeditiously as possible, temporary shelters will continue to be required over the winter season. This winter, the Region will be supporting operations at two seasonal shelters, Inn from the Cold (covering northern York Region) and Mosaic Interfaith Out of the Cold (covering the south) that offer a total of 45 cold weather shelter spaces, which will complement the 136 shelter spaces available throughout York Region. Attachment 2 provides details on seasonal shelter operations.

Staff is supporting the seasonal shelters to ensure infrastructure that allows for physical distancing and other precautions are implemented to address COVID-19 prevention and control in these settings. Advice from York Region Public Health and Public Health Ontario Congregate Living Settings guidelines are being followed. Phase Two of the provincial Social Services Relief Fund will help pay for these measures.

Paramedic Services continues to play an integral role in the health care system

911 call volumes have increased to their previous pre-COVID levels. In addition to responding to 911 calls, paramedics and the community paramedicine team continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as follows:

- Supporting community based COVID-19 testing as needed, including at multiple transitional housing sites
- Collaborating with Health System partners including Ontario Health Teams, Ontario Health, Planning and Implementation tables and local emergency services to provide coordinated supports

- Conducting COVID-19 testing of healthcare workers on site at Paramedic Services headquarters. As of September 22, 2020, there were 4,190 COVID-19 testing swabs completed (including preventative surveillance, clearance testing and active cases)
- Participating in the Universal Influenza Immunization Program this Fall by providing flu shots for vulnerable populations, first responders and health care providers
- Preparing to re-start Community Paramedicine Programs, including Home Visits and the CP@Clinic, which were both suspended due to COVID-19. Seniors buildings with higher 911 call volumes will be provided with re-introduced CP@Clinic programs twice per week to provide general assessments, identify risk factors, and provide health promotion and referrals as needed. The CP@Clinic program will be restarted in one building at a time to safely re-introduce the program with COVID-19 precautions

Seniors Services is responding to the second wave of the pandemic

To date, there have been no COVID-19 outbreaks at either Newmarket Health Centre or Maple Health Centre, York Region's two municipally operated long-term care homes (the Homes), despite 46 of Ontario's 630 long-term care homes currently in active COVID-19 outbreak as of September 29, 2020.

York Region's two long-term care homes continue to implement preventative measures to safeguard residents and staff as the second wave of the pandemic is underway, including:

- Creating education and guidelines for essential caregivers, support workers and visitors in the Homes to minimize the risk of introducing COVID-19, as required by the [Ministry in September 2020](#)
- Maintaining a robust inventory of Personal Protective Equipment (roughly 3 to 6 months' worth of supplies currently)
- Piloting the use of uniforms for staff as an enhanced infection prevention and control measure. Staff are provided with clean, laundered uniforms to change into upon arriving at work, to prevent cross-contamination that might happen when staff travel to work
- Testing staff biweekly and monitoring residents twice daily (including checking temperature and oxygen levels) as part of the Province's comprehensive surveillance strategy
- Conducting safe space planning
- Added screening questions for staff to determine who may have children attending school in-person or who may live with another health care worker, which assists in understanding how many staff could be required to self-isolate and plan for extra staffing resources

- Implemented a flu shot campaign including providing immunizations starting in October, beginning with residents and then followed by staff
- Enhanced contact tracing using screening and scheduling software to manage, identify, educate and monitor individuals who have been in close contact with someone infected with COVID-19
- Prepared isolation areas in each Home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the Homes should positive COVID-19 case be confirmed. The isolation areas are stocked with required medications, medical carts, isolation procedures, technological equipment, and staff are receiving training and education resources

Provincial rules for Long-term Care Home visitors and resident absences are continually changing, an area of concern to residents, and their family and friends

The Province has implemented new [changes in rules for visitors and resident absences](#) for long-term care homes in areas with higher community spread, including York Region. Effective October 16, 2020:

- Only essential visitors, including up to one caregiver per resident, may visit
- Short-stay and temporary absences are not permitted, with the exception of absences for medical or compassionate reasons

These requirements are difficult for all involved, however, the risk of COVID-19 getting into a home is an even greater problem. The Region is doing what it can to help residents and their friends and families, including:

- Continuing to provide small group recreational activities for residents
- Helping residents to have virtual visits with their families and friends
- Keeping families informed with regular situation reports

Seniors Community Programs are working on plans for the safe reopening of Adult Day Programs

The Region's five Adult Day Programs are not currently offering in-person programs due to physical distancing. Two are currently offering virtual programming continue to support our clients and their caregivers through weekly phone calls, programming activities, resources and referrals. The remaining three programs are developing virtual programming and anticipate gradually introducing in-person programming in early 2021, if it is safe to do so with the appropriate safety guidelines in place. The Psychogeriatric Resource Consultant program continues to provide virtual support to all 28 long-term care homes located in York Region.

York Region recognizes the need for continued improvements in long-term care and is preparing a submission to the Province's independent commission looking into the long-term care sector

On [July 29, 2020](#), the Province released details on the membership and scope of the Independent Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. The Commission will provide the government with guidance on how to better protect long-term care home residents and staff from future outbreaks. It is expected to deliver its final report by April 2021.

The Commission is currently collecting relevant documentary evidence necessary to their investigation and researching the experience of other countries' long-term care systems to provide information and context. It is engaging with residents and families to understand their experiences over the course of the pandemic and is also consulting with several individuals and organizations with expertise in gerontology and long-term care.

The Commission has invited comments, and staff are preparing a submission on areas for improvement. This submission is being developed in consultation with our long-term care front-line staff and department and corporate partners, and will be presented to Council for endorsement in early 2021.

Enhanced measures in Long-Term Care are resulting in unplanned staffing and budgetary pressures

The new protocols and infection prevention and control measures have resulted in unexpected and unplanned increases to staffing resources and enhancements to Personal Protective Equipment. The Homes have been fortunate to have access to redeployed staff to support these measures, however some redeployed staff have needed to return to their home position.

Temporary staffing resources to support our response to COVID-19 and compliance with provincial directives have been added. In the months ahead, additional resources will be needed to further prepare for any future waves of COVID-19 and subsequent recovery in operations and programs. These unplanned, yet necessary resources are causing budgetary pressures in the Homes.

Regional staff will monitor and leverage opportunities for provincial funding for long-term care to help address resource pressures

As of September 2020, the Region's two Homes have received \$361,200 in provincial COVID-19 Prevention and Containment Funding. On September 29, 2020, the Homes were notified they would receive an additional \$140,800 in October 2020, bringing the total to \$502,000. The province has not indicated the amount of future funding the Homes can expect to receive.

Additional provincial funding announcements have been made, with details to come:

- [October 1, 2020](#): \$461 million to temporarily enhance wages for personal support workers. This investment is intended to help attract and retain the workforce needed to care for patients, community care clients and long-term care residents. The temporary wage increase is effective October 1, 2020 and will provide an extra \$3/hour for eligible staff in long-term care homes, and may extend through to March 21, 2021.
- [September 29, 2020](#): \$540 million for the long-term care sector for emergency prevention and containment, staff recruitment and retention, infection prevention and containment resources, capital support and the extension of the High Wage Transition Fund until March 31, 2021. Extension of the High Wage Transition Fund will provide an additional \$46,300 for the Region's two Homes; details on other aspects of the funding announcement are pending
- [September 28, 2020](#): \$52.5 million to recruit, retain and support more health care workers, which could include support for long term care homes

The Region intends to apply for the Canada Infrastructure Program's new COVID-19 Resilience funding stream to create a more pandemic resilient infrastructure at its two long-term care homes

The \$33 billion Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program includes a new, temporary COVID-19 Resilience stream, with over \$3 billion for retrofits, repairs and upgrades for municipal, territorial, provincial and Indigenous buildings, health infrastructure and schools. The program will support COVID-19 response infrastructure, including measures supporting physical distancing.

Staff is preparing an application that will include retrofits to make our two long-term care Homes more pandemic resilient and strengthen physical distancing measures. Examples of changes include creating permanent screening areas and isolation units, and upgrading group activity rooms, visiting areas and staff break rooms.

Regional activities are being planned and implemented within available resources, including provincial and federal funding commitments, but additional resources going forward will likely be required

The Region's social service response is currently being delivered within the department's approved operating budget, supplemented by additional funding including under the provincial Social Services Relief Fund. In September, a business case was submitted to the Province for Phase 2 of the Social Services Relief Fund. On October 26, the Region received confirmation that it received approval for a total planning allocation of \$8,419,414 for Fiscal Year 2020 to 2021. Staff will be receiving feedback and direction from the Province on the Region's business case and will update Council at a future report.

Regional staff will continue to monitor community needs and their impact on Community and Health Services programs and will bring forward any funding pressures or opportunities, including as part of the 2021 budget process.

Katherine Chislett
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments (2)
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