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## MANAGEMENT REPORT

**Date:** April 12, 2023  
**To:** Social Services Sub-committee  
**From:** Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works  
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services  
**Report#:** SOC23-013  
**Attachments:** None

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**Title:** Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth and Ontario Works Service Agreement

**Objective:** To consider approval for The Corporation of the City of Stratford to enter into an agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services (CMHA HP), to deliver a case management and group supports program to participants involved with the Social Services Department, as noted in the agreement and to request delegated authority for the Director of Social Services or Chief Administrative Officer to execute future renewal agreements with CMHA HP until 2028.

**Background:** Effective January 1, 2023, Resilience Huron Perth Mental Health Services and Choices for Change: Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Counselling Centre (CFC) merged under the banner of the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services. Historically, the Ontario Works Division has maintained a close relationship with Choices for Change as they were the provider for the Addictions Services Initiative (ASI) program until the Ministry ended the pilot in 2019. After that program ceased, the Ontario Works Division and CFC maintained an ongoing service agreement to provide front-of-line counselling and support services to Ontario Works recipients, in tandem with an Ontario Works caseworker. This agreement ended on December 31, 2022, and requires a comprehensive update to reflect the changing landscape of mental health and addictions in Stratford, St Marys, and Perth County.

This agreement represents an enhanced relationship between the Social Services Department and CMHA HP to deliver case management supports through various modalities such as 1:1 appointment-based work, drop-in supports at the Ontario Works office and both closed and open groups specifically catered to recipients of Ontario Works.

**Analysis:** The goal of this service agreement is to offer both group and 1:1 appointment-based and drop-in support options for individuals in receipt, or connected to, Ontario Works who identify service needs or life stability goals related to their mental health and/or addiction-related concerns. Based on the Stability Supports Model, these services will support mental health and wellness and provide tools and resources to manage or make changes to identified substance use concerns and behavioural addictions. By partnering to provide services, clients will become engaged with supports in their community and can receive wrap-around support for other co-occurring experiences for which they are seeking support. The primary focus of this service agreement is to better outcomes for clients in receipt of Ontario Works in the Stability Supports goals of Health and Community Support.

This Program is intended for individuals and families who are:

- In receipt of Ontario Works, and
- Facing barriers to employment and life stability due to their mental health and/or addictions.

The modalities utilized will include:

### **1:1 and Drop-in Support**

Both counselling and case management staff at CMHA HP will staff this support option. Counsellors will be available to offer single session counselling support related to both behavioural and substance use concerns and case managers will offer support related to mental health concerns, including substance use disorder. Clients may book appointments for these times but are not required to do so. The goal of offering support within the Ontario Works offices at a recurring time is to provide support to those who otherwise may identify difficulty in attending regularly scheduled appointments.

### **Group-based Support**

Group support shall include both open and closed options, designed to provide education, support, practical tools, and a supportive environment where Ontario Works clients can thrive and work toward greater employability and life stability.

Through this agreement, Ontario Works recipients will now be able to receive mental health counselling through Family Services Perth-Huron while also receiving case management support and addictions counselling from CMHA HP. These agreements, in conjunction with the work being done by Social Services staff, will enhance the wrap-around supports available to individuals in our community with the goal of improving overall life stability, employability and general wellness.

As CMHA HP is uniquely positioned as the only agency in the catchment area capable of providing these services, the City's Procurement Policy, section 37 permits sole-source approvals and is appropriate for this agreement.

The agreement with CMHA HP and corresponding program delivery is provided through the Ontario Works Employment Supports portfolio, and is 100% funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The funding requested has increased to \$40,000 per year, from \$27,500, for services rendered and corresponds with a significant increase to the number of services being offered as the program now goes beyond just addictions counselling to include mental health case management, drop-in support at 82 Erie Street and group sessions.

### **Financial Implications:**

#### **Financial impact to current year operating budget:**

The program expenses and 100% of the funding are administered by the Ontario Works division, Employment Supports. The cost of the program is \$40,000, which is fully funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. This expense has been budgeted as part of both the municipal and Provincial budgeting process.

#### **Financial impact on future year operating budget:**

This program has been budgeted on an ongoing basis for the duration of the contract (until 2028, subject to annual renewals). The cost of the program is expected to remain at \$40,000, which is fully funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. If there are changes to the amount requested or there are concerns of contractual performance, the City has the ability to terminate the agreement.

As this program is 100% Provincially funded through the Ontario Works division, there is no anticipated impact on future year municipal operating budgets. The contract is subject to the City's budget approval and the Provincial funding, on an annual basis.

### **Alignment with Strategic Priorities:**

#### **Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships**

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

### **Alignment with One Planet Principles:**

#### **Health and Happiness**

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

**Equity and Local Economy**

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

**Staff Recommendation: THAT The Corporation of the City of Stratford enter into an agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services to deliver the Ontario Works Service Agreement as detailed in the agreement for 2023;**

**THAT the Mayor and Clerk, or their respective delegates, be authorized to execute the agreement with Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services on behalf of the municipal corporation;**

**AND THAT City Council delegates its signing authority to the Director of Social Services or the Chief Administrative Officer to execute future renewal agreements with Canadian Mental Health Association Huron-Perth Addictions and Mental Health Services until 2028, subject to satisfactory contract performance or any amendments to funding identified by the City.**

**Prepared by:** Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works  
**Recommended by:** Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services  
Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer