

## Minutes

### The Regional Municipality of Durham Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness COVID-19 Homelessness Response Network April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### In Attendance:

Erin Valant	Region of Durham
Stephanie Ross	Region of Durham
Jessica Robinson	Community Living Durham North
Chantal Branchaud	Community Living Durham North
Dawn De Souza	Community Living Durham North
Megan Hueser-Shields	Region of Durham
Mona Emond	North House
Alyx Riddell	Region of Durham
Maureen Bandola	John Howard Society
Sam Kwan	VHA Home Health Care
Councillor Bob Chapman	City of Oshawa
Alan Robins	Region of Durham
Vanessa Bilenduke	CDCD
Dianna Eastwood	John Howard Society
Rob Brglez	Cornerstone
Rob Adams	Durham Mental Health Services
Troy White	Carea
Jeanne Thomas	Central East Local Health Integration Network
Clarence Keesman	The Refuge
Alyssa Skan	Cornerstone
Mayor Carter	City of Oshawa
Ryan Rayner	DRPS
Marla Waters	Christian Faith Outreach Centre
Doreen Hume McKenna	Durham Mental Health Services
Stephanie Skopyk	CMHA

#### COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Response

##### Response for At-Risk Clients

- Hotel partnerships across Durham Region have been secured to provide enhanced social and physical distancing measures for shelter clients at increased risk of developing complications if they were to contract the virus.
- This cohort of clients continue to be supported by shelter operators.

### Response for Pending/Positive COVID-19 Homeless Clients

- A new hotel partnership in Ajax (Super 8) was secured to isolate homeless clients pending COVID-19 test results as well as clients who have tested positive for the virus.
- A formal process has been established with the Durham Region Health Department, Durham Region Housing Services, Emergency Shelter Operators and the Hotel Ownership.
- This cohort of clients continue to be supported by shelter operators.

### Assistance Needed

- Shelter operators are currently providing the case management, wellness checks and food deliveries for these two cohorts of clients.
- As the need increases, assistance will be needed to complete telephone wellness checks and drop meals off at hotels.

### Camp Samac Facility

- Two buildings have been secured at Camp Samac with others available should the need arise.
- One building will be for staff use and the other is intended to support unsheltered residents who need access to isolation/recovery space. This building has capacity for up to 80 people and is equipped with bunks, washroom facilities, showers and a kitchen.
- The operationalization plan includes 24/7 onsite security, food services, janitorial services, safe transportation, health and homelessness supports.

### Assistance Needed

- We are looking to this committee to help us determine the staffing model needed to operationalize Camp Samac. We will need homelessness sector supports including daytime workshops and activities (while still ensuring physical distancing), harm reduction supports, on-site health supports, etc.

### **COVID-19 PPE Response for Homelessness Support Providers**

- The COVID-19 PPE Response is being implemented to ensure frontline workers in the homelessness support system have access to the protective equipment they need to continue to provide essential supports across Durham.
- A partnership with a new supplier has been successful in ensuring that homelessness support organizations have access to an adequate supply of PPE.
- Requests for PPE support from homelessness support providers should be directed to Stephanie Ross at [Stephanie.Ross@durham.ca](mailto:Stephanie.Ross@durham.ca).

### **COVID-19 Unsheltered Residents Response**

- We are working with our municipal and support partners to identify and operationalize locations for unsheltered residents to access washroom and shower facilities in response to community closures.

- Stephanie Skopyk outlined the model being established in Oshawa at the Backdoor Mission. The Oshawa Intercity Health Collaboration is establishing a centralized service operation for washroom and shower access, screening, mental health supports, withdrawal management and harm reduction, food services, health education, housing outreach supports, etc. Contact Stephanie at (stephanies@cmhadurham.org) for more information.
- Locations for washroom and shower access have also been identified in Whitby, Ajax and Pickering. More details will be shared at our next meeting as plans are finalized.
- An idea was brought forward to see if there are TV's at any of these locations to use as information boards for people accessing the sites.

#### Assistance Needed

- We are looking to this committee to help identify staffing resources that may be able to help at these sites with providing resources and service navigation for unsheltered residents.

#### **General Discussion**

- People are still looking for places to rent, but many landlords are not willing to show their units to clients right now. This seems to be increasingly common in rooming house vacancies. The Salvation Army has had success showing units virtually to fill vacancies.
  - This conversation will be continued at our next meeting.
- Rob from Cornerstone said there has been a drop in Shelter use due to people being taken in by friends/family. There seems to be a lot of people on the street but that could be the result of services that have closed. Seeing violence on the street due to bad drugs.
- Ontario Shores has been given a quantity of (50) \$50 grocery cards for the Superstore as assistance to those with mental health/addiction. If you have a client in need contact: A/Staff Sergeant Ryan Rayner 3647@drps.ca.
- There is a need for gas cards for people living in north Durham.

#### **Next Meeting**

- Tuesday, April 14th from 1:00pm-3:00pm
- Send any agenda items to Alyxandra.Riddell@durham.ca by end of day Thursday to be added to the following Monday's agenda