
For Information

REPORT TITLE: Update on Supporting Seniors in Peel

FROM: Nancy Polsinelli, Commissioner of Health Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide an update on the Region of Peel’s current supports and services for Peel seniors; the impacts and opportunities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and, the Region’s ongoing commitments to leverage existing community partnerships to advance the Term of Council Priority to Enhance Seniors’ Supports and Services and lead system change.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- On June 13, 2019, “Enhancing Seniors’ Supports and Services” was identified as one of the Region of Peel’s seven Term of Council Priorities (Seniors ToCP). Since then, the Region of Peel (Region) has pursued collaborative opportunities to ensure that the growing population of seniors in Peel and their caregivers can access supports and services to optimize their quality of life.
 - To achieve the Seniors ToCP, the Region will develop a Seniors Master Plan that defines a long-term strategy to maximize quality of life for seniors in Peel, and is strengthening collaboration across Regional seniors’ services to optimize planning and delivery of programs in the community.
 - As a municipal level of government, the Region has remained committed to providing high quality services, including the Region’s Adult Day Services and ongoing development of the Seniors Health and Wellness Village at Peel Manor.
 - Key partnerships through local Ontario Health Teams, in addition to ongoing collaboration at system tables created in response to the pandemic such as the Integrated Response Table and Community Response Table, are critical to advance the Seniors ToCP and support the needs of seniors during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Collaboration and partnership have remained central to the work of the Region and staff will continue to advance opportunities with community partners, the provincial government and Ontario Health to ensure that seniors in Peel remain healthy, safe and continue to enjoy a Community for Life.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Region is experiencing a demographic shift much like other jurisdictions across Ontario, where seniors (individuals aged 65 and older) are the fastest growing age group in the population. By 2041, the number of seniors in Peel is expected to grow to 415,000, an increase of 134 per cent from 2014. By then, one in five residents will be a senior.

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Accelerated growth is also expected among the oldest seniors in Peel, with the proportion of the population aged 85 years and older projected to grow from 1 per cent in 2011 to 3.8 per cent in 2041. As seniors are living longer, their demands, needs, and expectations for community and health services increase and become more complex.

The First Interim Report from the Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine was released on January 31, 2019. In it, the provincial government committed to building long term capacity by ensuring that the existing health system could balance capacity pressures against important measures of health care excellence and sustainability. This included ensuring the availability and appropriate mix of services, especially for seniors. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated system challenges along the continuum of care and further emphasized the need to provide high quality care in the community in order to delay the need for long term care placement and reduce pressures on the acute care system. It is expected that the Provincial Seniors Strategy, currently being developed, will focus on supporting seniors across the entire continuum of care to allow supports for aging in place, remaining healthy, being active and socially engaged, and staying safe and secure.

On June 13, 2019, "Enhance Seniors' Supports and Services" was identified as one of the Region's seven Term of Council Priorities (ToCP). This ToCP had been identified as a priority due to gaps and complexities within the health and social systems in Peel which prevent seniors and their caregivers from successfully navigating and accessing a range of services that support healthy aging. A progress update on all ToCPs was provided to Council at the December 10, 2020 meeting, in the report titled, 'Regional Council Strategic Plan and Community for Life Public Reporting'.

2. The Region of Peel's Role in Supporting Peel's Seniors

While some services that are provided by the Region (e.g., long term care) are required through legislation, many innovative services and programs that the Region offers fill gaps when provincially mandated services or funding are insufficient. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Region has built upon this approach to develop innovative programs, supports and services to meet the needs of the older population.

a) Term of Council Priority – Enhance Seniors' Supports and Services

Currently, the Region is focused on advancing two complementary strategies to achieve the mandates of the Seniors ToCP - completing a Seniors Master Plan that defines a long-term strategy to maximize quality of life for seniors and strengthening cross-departmental collaboration on seniors-focused programs to optimize service planning and delivery.

i) Development of the Seniors Master Plan

The Seniors ToCP project officially launched on March 10, 2020 and targeted several deliverables to achieve in 2020 related to creating a Seniors Master Plan. Initiatives that were underway in the first phase of planning before the COVID-19 pandemic included project planning, stakeholder analysis, and developing a plan to leverage community engagement and feedback, and a current population profile and projections of future status and needs. The next steps will build from the information gathered through the first phase of planning and include community engagement to

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prioritize critical directions and move towards implementation. The Seniors Master Plan will be completed by the end of the current term of Council.

ii) Ensuring Regional Seniors Services Collaboration

Program areas that have not traditionally focused on seniors have been working collaboratively across sector boundaries to achieve multi-system and client-centred solutions that accommodate the unique needs of seniors. Further, pilot opportunities have been carefully selected to advance outcomes that are well-established determinants of healthy aging involving age-friendly housing, age-friendly transportation, integrated community and caregiver supports. For example, the Region's Volunteer Resources and Peel Housing Corporation have come together to design and implement a volunteer telephone companion program and an on-site ambassador program to reduce social isolation and improve overall health and well-being for seniors in Peel Living buildings. Additional efforts to create affordable housing options under Peel's Housing and Homelessness Plan will enable more seniors to age in place.

b) Adult Day Services

Adult Day Services (ADS), which are provided by the Region as well as other community partners, provide a range of supports (including physical, social, and therapeutic activities) for frail seniors. Clients that attend ADS include individuals living with physical or chronic disabilities or cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer's and other dementias. As part of the Region's pandemic response, in person ADS programs were closed to protect client health and most staff were redeployed to support residents in the Region's long term care homes. In order to keep connected during the pandemic, new communication strategies such as publishing weekly electronic newsletters with resources, as well as educational and virtual activities were implemented.

Currently, ADS is being redeveloped to support clients and caregivers at home via telephone and virtual programs. Planning the physical reopening of a modified ADS has necessitated creation of innovative, future-oriented models of care to support clients and caregivers into 2021 as part of our 'next normal'. New programming within a remote, digitally supported care model includes partnering with Volunteer Support Services to support clients and caregivers on our program waitlists.

c) Seniors Health and Wellness Village

The Seniors Health and Wellness Village (SHWV) at Peel Manor redevelopment initiative includes several integrated components that all contribute to improving the lives of seniors and address many of the challenges amplified during COVID-19. Physically, the largest component of the SHWV facility will be the modernized long term care home. The new home will incorporate up-to-date technology, features supportive of dementia care, and design elements that will contribute to improved infection prevention and control.

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i) Service Hub

A Service Hub will operate on the main floor of the SHWV and include a greatly expanded ADS program, an 8-bed respite care unit, a seniors-focused integrated care clinic, accessible dental care, and a variety of other health and social services.

ii) Peel Integrated Care model

The service hub will also support a “Peel Integrated Care” (PIC) model that is currently under development. The ‘designed in Peel’ PIC model is based on the proven Programs for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) model of care, an integrated service delivery model that is widely implemented across the United States. The PIC model and team are being built iteratively, with the first iteration operational within the Peel Manor ADS space in January 2020. Once the SHWV facility is ready, the PIC team and operations will transfer over to the Service Hub and play a key role in assessing needs and connecting clients with services in the Service Hub as well as those available in the broader community.

iii) Advocacy

Provincial funding to support the redevelopment of Peel Manor is a longstanding Regional advocacy priority. Recently, staff have engaged with the Minister of Long-Term Care (Hon. Merrilee Fullerton) and Minister of Seniors and Accessibility (Hon. Raymond Cho), along with staff from both Ministries, to request support for the Region to expand its provision of much needed services for seniors in Peel, with funding to support the SHWV as a key component of these efforts. In September 2020, the Region of Peel applied for redevelopment funding through the Provincial long term care capital development program but was not successful in receiving funding.

iv) Timelines

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted multiple aspects of the SHWV initiative including the overall construction timeline. The Region is currently assessing the impacts to the project schedule from the ongoing pandemic, and other factors including existing site conditions and contractor challenges. Staff are reviewing options to mitigate these impacts.

The original SHWV facility construction schedule targeted substantial completion in Q3 2021 and move-in is scheduled for Q4 2021. The Service Hub component is scheduled to be fully operational in late 2022, post demolition of the old building and creation of an adjacent seniors-friendly park. Staff will provide a detailed update to Regional Council on progress and next steps for the SHWV at Peel Manor initiative later this year.

3. Coordinated Response to Community Needs During COVID-19

COVID-19 has emphasized the vulnerability of seniors in our community during a time requiring self-isolation and quarantine. While many seniors in Peel continue to live independently in their homes, many others rely on formal supports such as home and community services and/or informal support through their family and caregivers. In

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response, the Region and many community partners have identified new and innovative ways to work collaboratively and bridge existing needs in the community.

a) Integrated Response Table

The Region, in collaboration with Ontario Health Central Region, established the Integrated Response Table (IRT) on April 15, 2020 which meets regularly to coordinate a local response in support of staff and residents living in congregate settings (i.e. long term care homes, retirement homes, homeless shelters and other similar facilities). The IRT includes representation from Central Region Ontario Health, Central West and Mississauga Halton LHINs, Peel Public Health, Peel Region Paramedic Services and local hospitals to interpret and apply provincial direction with respect to COVID testing; to collectively identify congregate settings requiring urgent support; and to mobilize rapid response for testing; surveillance and monitoring; infection prevention and control (IPAC); health human resources; virtual care; and communications.

b) Community Response Table

The Region implemented the Community Response Table (CRT) in March 2020 to support coordination, information sharing, problem-solving, and collaboration among community agencies to respond to needs of vulnerable populations during the pandemic. Health and Human Services staff from the Region have engaged over 90 members from various community and social services organizations, as well as staff from the cities of Brampton and Mississauga, and Town of Caledon, to identify and address key operational priorities and challenges to better serve vulnerable populations including seniors.

Through the CRT, qualitative survey data revealed that seniors were heavily impacted by isolation and the transition of services to virtual programming. Many seniors have struggled with access and use of technology and were left isolated due to their susceptibility to COVID-19 and inability to leave their homes. In response, some community agencies in Peel have offered services such as calling seniors, offering grocery and medicine pick-up, and other supports with daily living to help meet their needs. The CRT-led survey is an example where community service providers, including the Region, have come together to identify existing needs and opportunities.

4. The Way Forward

Collaboration and partnership are central to the work that the Region has committed to achieve for seniors in Peel through the ToCP. During the pandemic, community partners have continued to articulate opportunities for the Region of Peel's system support role to be enhanced: backbone support for planning and coordination tables; support with data collection, management and analysis; and supporting advocacy, along with other more responsive initiatives.

An important example of the Region's collaborative work is the ongoing participation in the development of three local Ontario Health Teams (OHTs). While COVID-19 has forced all OHTs to pivot their focus to more urgent, pandemic-focused priorities, the Region remains a committed partner and continues to work with Peel's hospital and health system partners to address immediate needs in the community, as well as identify opportunities for enhanced wrap-around care for Peel's most vulnerable residents. For example, as an engaged partner in the Brampton Etobicoke OHT, the Region of Peel supported an application for

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Ontario Health's High Intensity Supports at Home Program (HISHP), which if funded will pilot a coordinated wrap-around approach to care for complex clients within the OHT geography, and leverage existing Regional supports including community paramedics and the Peel Integrated Care team.

The Region's work to advance the SHWV's Service Hub and PIC model, is another important example of how the Region is working with health system partners to build alignment on mutual objectives shared by the Province and OHTs, including reducing use of hospitals, delaying or avoiding admission of seniors into residential care, and providing coordination of care and system navigation of services. Ongoing efforts to build the SWHV Service Hub and PIC model will allow the Region to provide a higher level of value-added supports to Peel's seniors, and their caregivers, allowing them to more successfully age in place.

CONCLUSION

The Region continues to be a leader in applying innovative approaches to support seniors across the continuum of care and is committed to making changes across the seniors and long term care sector. Moreover, the Region will pursue partnership and collaboration with the province and Ontario Health to provide valuable industry insights and expertise, and to advocate for sustainable funding in support of innovative projects such as SWHV and PIC model.

Staff will report back to Council on the progress of the Seniors Master Plan, Seniors Services Integration Planning, and ongoing advocacy for Provincial funding to support the SHWV and other seniors-focused supports in the community.

For further information regarding this report, please contact Donna Kern, Director, Seniors Services Development, donna.kern@peelregion.ca.

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