
For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Update on Supporting Seniors in Peel**

FROM: Cathy Granger, Acting Commissioner of Health Services

OBJECTIVE

To update council 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's seven Term of Council Priorities (Seniors ToCP). Since then, the Region has actively pursued collaborative opportunities with community partners 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.
 - Given the more recent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, collaboration and partnership have remained central to the work of the Region. Key partnerships through local Ontario Health Teams established prior to the pandemic, 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 not only address the Seniors ToCP but also support the needs of seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The Region of Peel continues to be committed to building partnerships and working collaboratively 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 of Peel 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

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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. Accelerated growth is also expected among the oldest seniors in Peel, with the proportion of residents 85 years and older anticipated to grow from 1 per cent to 3.8 per cent between 2011 and 2041. As the proportion of seniors in the population 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. This strategic focus of the Provincial Government has also been central to the development of a Provincial Seniors Strategy which is currently underway. It 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.

According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the municipal sector in Ontario is increasingly at the forefront of developing age-friendly communities and providing vital services to seniors.¹ The Region of Peel plays an important role in providing vital services that support seniors including long-term care, community support services including adult day programs, paramedic services, and affordable housing.

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. To address this ToCP, the Region is actively working to ensure that the growing population of seniors and their caregivers can access supports and services to optimize their quality of life.

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

As a municipal level of government, the Region has remained committed to providing high quality services to Peel residents while ensuring access to, and safety and affordability of services. 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. Further, the Region continues to seek out and develop innovative programs, supports and services to meet the needs of the older population and has advanced this work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO). (2016). Strengthening Age-Friendly Communities and Seniors' Services for 21st Century Ontario – A New Conversation about the Municipal Role. Retrieved from: <https://www.amo.on.ca/AMO-PDFs/Reports/2016/StrengtheningAgeFriendlyCommunitiesSeniorsServices.aspx>

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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. It is anticipated that while the Master Plan development is underway, quick wins, lessons learned, and experiences shared from the coordinated application of a seniors perspective to planning and delivery of services will also inform and reinforce the content of the Master Plan as well as its implementation.

i) Development of the Seniors Master Plan

The Seniors ToCP project officially launched on March 10th, 2020 and targeted several deliverables to be achieved in 2020 related to the creation of a Seniors Master Plan. Initiatives that were underway in the first phase of planning prior to the COVID-19 pandemic included project planning, stakeholder analysis, and developing a plan to leverage community engagement and feedback, as well as a Seniors Portrait to include a current population profile and projections of future status and needs. Next steps will build from the information gathered through the first phase of planning and include community engagement to help prioritize key 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 had not traditionally focused on seniors but have important implications for the well-being of seniors and their caregivers, have been working together to develop solutions for a common client group through the integration of seniors services. 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. System partners are working collaboratively across traditional sector boundaries to achieve a multi-system and client-centred response that focuses on the needs of all Peel residents including seniors. 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 support vulnerable seniors in Peel Living Buildings. The program is being introduced in a phased manner and aims to reduce social isolation, enhance information sharing and community connectedness and improve overall health and well-being, which are particularly important for residents who are seniors.

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, including individuals living with physical or chronic disabilities or cognitive impairments such as Alzheimer’s and other dementias. Early in the Region’s pandemic response ADS programs were closed to protect client health and most staff were redeployed to support residents in long term care homes. In order to keep

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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 virtual programming and partnering with Volunteer Support Services to develop consistent support for clients and caregivers on our program waitlists.

c) Seniors Health and Wellness Village

The Seniors Health and Wellness Village (SHWV) at Peel Manor 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. One example of the thoughtful design is that the "Basic" bedroom design is more aligned with the Ministry's "Semi-Private" bedroom definition. Within each basic room, there will be two one-bed bedrooms with a shared ensuite washroom. The two bedrooms will be separated by a wall, not by a privacy curtain.

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 health 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 is being built iteratively, with the first iteration having become 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 client needs and connecting clients with Service Hub services as well as those available in the broader community.

iii) Timelines

The SHWV facility construction is scheduled for 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. The Service Hub will require additional funding to be fully operational. However, it is expected that components of the Hub including the seniors healthcare clinic, dental operatory and operational costs associated with

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the respite centre and expansion of ADS will be covered by revenue streams and other funding sources such as the provincial Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) or the Ontario Health Team/Local Health Integration Network funding. Final funding streams will need to be confirmed and established prior to the formal opening of the Seniors Hub targeted for 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had impacts to 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 various other factors including existing site conditions and contractor challenges and is reviewing options to mitigate these impacts.

3. Collaborative Approaches to Responding to Community Needs During COVID-19

COVID-19 has emphasized both existing gaps of seniors supports, services and coordination in the community, and the vulnerability of seniors during a time requiring self isolation and quarantine. However, while many seniors in Peel continue to live independently in their homes, there are many who require additional supports and rely on formal supports such as home and community services and/or informal support through their family and caregivers. The pandemic has demonstrated areas of opportunity to strengthen supports and services in Peel for seniors, where they are needed most. In response, both 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 COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly detrimental to the health and well-being of seniors, as noted above. Given these impacts, the Region of Peel responded quickly through collaboration and coordination with stakeholders to support seniors. The Region, in collaboration with Ontario Health Central Region, established the Integrated Response Table (IRT) on April 15 to support integrated response planning for congregate settings (like long term care homes, retirement homes, homeless shelters and other related facilities). The IRT has included representation from LHINs (Central West and Mississauga Halton), Peel Region Public Health, Peel Region Paramedic Services (PRPS) and local hospitals (Trillium Health Partners and William Osler Health System), meet regularly to identify congregate settings requiring urgent support and to mobilize rapid response with priority areas such as testing; surveillance and ongoing 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) which launched in March 2020 to support coordination, information sharing, problem-solving, and collaboration among community agencies to respond to needs of vulnerable populations during pandemic. Health and Humans 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.

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Through the CRT, qualitative survey data revealed that seniors were heavily impacted by isolation and the transition of services to virtual programming.² 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 collaboratively identify existing needs and opportunities. This work has also underscored the need for a coordinated response across a continuum of community supports for seniors.

Further to the on-going initiatives, the CRT has also established a Seniors Sub-table that is dedicated to working with its local community agencies to understand the issues they face and to collectively come up with solutions.

4. The Way Forward

Collaboration and partnership are central to the work that the Region has committed to achieving for seniors in Peel through the ToCP. During the pandemic, community partners continued to articulate opportunities where they would like to see Regional leadership advanced: backbone support for planning and coordination tables; support with data collection, management and analysis; and advocacy, along with other more responsive initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An important example of the Region's collaborative work to address the needs of seniors that commenced before the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued since, is the ongoing participation in the development of three local Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), as previously reported to Council. While the Region remains a committed and involved partner in local OHTs, COVID-19 has forced all OHTs to pivot their focus to more immediate, pandemic-focused priorities. Staff are actively involved in working with local OHTs to ensure that seniors are reflected in the priority populations of focus, and are working with Peel's hospital and health system partners to work on upstream solutions to identify opportunities to the address the needs of seniors through the evolving priorities within each of the three local area OHTs.

The Region's work to advance the SHWV's Service Hub and PIC model, as discussed above, are another important example of how the Region continues to work with health system partners to build alignment around mutual objectives shared by the Province and OHTs, including reducing usage of hospitals, delaying or avoiding admission of seniors into institutions, providing coordination of care and system navigation services, and improving a range of outcomes linked to the "quadruple aim" including better patient and population health outcomes; better patient, family and caregiver experience; better provider experience; and, better cost per capita. 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.

² Region of Peel. (2020). Region of Peel's Community Agencies COVID-19 Recovery Planning Survey Findings – Executive Summary and Full Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/community-response-table/pdf/community-agencies-recovery-planning-survey.pdf>

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CONCLUSION

The Region continues to be an industry leader in applying innovative approaches to best support its seniors across the continuum of care. As the province is committed to making changes across the seniors and long term care sector, the Region continues to be committed to building partnerships and working collaboratively with the government 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 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 the strategic planning and advocacy work underway, staff look forward to reporting back to Council on the progress of the Seniors Master Plan, Seniors Services Integration Planning, and ongoing advocacy for Provincial funding to support the Region's 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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Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:

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Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.



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