



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Rate Paid for Contracted Supportive Housing Services under the Supportive Housing Program (SHP)

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| Date: | May 18, 2007 |
| To: | Community Development and Recreation Committee |
| From: | General Manager, Homes for the Aged |
| Wards: | All |
| Reference Number: | |

SUMMARY

The Supportive Housing Program (SHP) delivers services to an average of 240 clients each month. SHP clients are over the age of 59, and most are frail elderly. Services such as personal care, homemaking, light meal preparation, medication reminders, and security checks are provided to clients as 24-hour intermittent support, which allows them to remain in their community and age in place. While the City has an RPN on staff at each site to assess clients and provide wellness programming, the services are provided to clients by contracted service agencies. The rate paid to agencies has not increased since 2002.

Contracted provider agencies require sufficient numbers of staff with the appropriate skill levels to deal with our client population. These same agencies assert that they are challenged to meet expenses with the current rate structure. There is a real possibility that some contracted service agencies may choose to discontinue service to City Supportive Housing programs. Any reduction or change in agencies willing to contract with the City to provide personal support service negatively impacts on the ability to meet client needs and results in less flexibility to provide appropriate service.

The SHP is 100 percent funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). The proposed rate increase will be absorbed within the approved operating budget for the SHP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Homes for the Aged recommends that:

1. the hourly rate paid to community service agencies contracted by the SHP is increased from \$20.00 to \$21.20 effective January 1, 2007;
2. the General Manager, Homes for the Aged be authorized to negotiate annual rate increases in 2008, 2009 and 2010 that do not exceed the rate of inflation and are within the Division's approved base program budget; and
3. the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising out of this report. The supportive housing services will continue to be fully funded by the MOHLTC, as outlined in the *Long-Term Care Act*, and the rate increase will be managed within the approved 2007 operating budget.

DECISION HISTORY

The 2002 rate increase was approved by City Council at its meeting on April 16, 17 and 18, 2002 through adoption of Clause No. 19 of Report No. 3 of the Community Services Committee.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

From 1969 to June 1993, under the "satellite home" provisions of the *Homes for Aged and Rest Homes Act*, the Homes for the Aged Division had purchased service agreements with a number of retirement homes, groups homes, and seniors' residences, with the objective of providing 24-hour service to seniors who required the support of a communal living environment, but who did not require the full services of a home for the aged.

In July 1993, the MOHLTC discontinued the "satellite home" program through a policy decision and replaced it with a supportive housing program. Under supportive housing, the MOHLTC funds the provision of 24-hour personal care and homemaking services to clients in approved sites, as a community-based alternative.

With the discontinuation of the "satellite home" program, the MOHLTC agreed to transfer funding for existing "satellite home" programs to supportive housing programs, with the provision that the sites would develop multi-year plans to deliver services in a manner that was consistent with supportive housing policy requirements.

Only one retirement home, Cedarbrook Lodge, chose to transition their “satellite home” program into a supportive housing program. Willowdale Manor, a Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) seniors building transitioned from a satellite home program to supportive housing, and four more programs were started in TCHC buildings: Broadview Manor (January 2002), 111 Kendleton (September 2005), Brimley Acres (January 2006) and Dundas-Mabelle (April 2007).

The current rate of \$20.00 has been in effect since 2002. Meanwhile, the agencies have had to increase the wages of their employees because of movement on the grid and new collective agreements. Two agencies have reported an increase in benefit costs alone of 23 percent over the last year. Because the basket of services delivered by the SHP includes personal care (i.e. bathing, dressing), the staff providing the care must have completed a PSW training course. This added skill level commands a higher wage in the workplace.

Contracted community service agencies require sufficient numbers of staff with PSW training to deliver responsive and effective community care. Many agencies state that they must provide realistic wages to attract and retain the required staff. However, if rates do not keep up with the increased cost of doing business, they fear they will not be able to remain competitive.

COMMENTS

SHP delivers services to an average of 240 clients each month. Services allow seniors to remain in their community and age in place. Any changes to contracted agencies will negatively impact on this population who are primarily frail elderly and who are already coping with changes to their health and psychosocial needs. Agency staff is familiar with the specific needs of this population, and clients are comfortable seeking out staff when necessary. In addition, the proposed increase will be absorbed within the approved operating budget for SH which is fully funded by the MOHLTC.

In his vision for Toronto, one of Mayor Miller’s priorities is to establish partnerships with community agencies to meet the growing demand and need for supportive housing services for seniors in not-for-profit buildings. Therefore, it is important to address any issues that presently exist with community agencies with whom there are agreements so that the agencies continue to value partnerships with the City. A rate increase will ensure that our current contracted community service agencies are paid fairly and at a rate that will assist in recruitment and retention of staff. The proposed increase will demonstrate the City’s commitment to a strong community service sector, re-affirm our willingness to work fairly with contracted community service agencies and provide an additional strategy to carry out the mandate of the SHP.

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SIGNATURE

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