



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

HFA Division – Request for Expenditure from Education Donations Account for Educational Pilot Project – Preventing Bullying in the Workplace

Date:	February 6, 2008
To:	Advisory Committee on Homes for the Aged
From:	General Manager, Homes for the Aged
Wards:	Ward 3
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Many employers are recognizing that workplace bullying is a significant workplace issue that negatively affects staff morale. Some organizations have expanded their definition of workplace violence to include bullying. Currently, the City of Toronto's Occupational Health and Safety Coordinating Committee (OHSCC) is analyzing the results of a recent 'Preventing Workplace Violence' staff survey. Based on the results of this survey, the OHSCC will develop a work plan, including the roll-out of education on the prevention of workplace violence throughout 2008. However, it is not yet common in Canada to include workplace bullying in formal violence in the workplace programs. In addition, harassment and bullying do not fall within the Ministry of Labour's scope, unless a worker has been injured or has reasonable grounds to believe that she/he is at risk of injury.

Notwithstanding, Toronto Homes for the Aged is aware that bullying does exist in Ontario's workplaces and we are anxious to proactively address it through a pilot project, develop a prevention strategy and implement education program that will be used in all of our other work locations in the future.

When Wesburn Manor opened in 2004, staff from a number of other Toronto Homes for the Aged transferred to the new home, for a variety of reasons. There is significant evidence that when re-organization occurs, newly formed teams move through several phases of development including norming and storming, before they become high performing teams. Wesburn Manor continues to experience workplace stress related to lack of respect, lack of team synergy and symptoms of workplace bullying. As a result,

Wesburn Manor management team embraced the idea of developing and piloting the 'Prevent Workplace Bullying' strategy and educational program, as a pilot project.

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager, Homes for the Aged recommends that the Advisory Committee on Homes for the Aged endorse the requested expenditure for \$3,600.00 plus GST and expenses from the Staff Education Donations Account.

Financial Impact

There is no impact on the 2008 operating budget.

This expenditure request is for use of the Staff Education Donations Account and is made in accordance with the criteria for use of this fund.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Wesburn Manor explored contracting with external consultants who have provided educational and consulting advice in long-term care settings related to staff education on the topics of respect in the workplace, harassment and workplace bullying. Wesburn Manor proposed to the General Manager that the home enlist the expertise of Denise Koster, of Koster Consulting and Associates to conduct education and workplace awareness sessions at all levels of the organization, including management and front-line unionized staff.

The General Manager advised CUPE Local 79 of the intent of the education and awareness building sessions, and securing endorsement from CUPE Local 79 regarding the pilot educational experience, and agreement that upon completion of the pilot, the parties would jointly evaluate it, for consideration in other homes.

The proposed plan would allow managers to engage in self-directed learning and attend a one-day workshop; front-line staff would be engaged in self-directed learning and would be able to participate in a three-hour workshop (repeated four times, to secure maximum participation).

The cost of the total program is \$3,600.00 plus GST and expenses.

COMMENTS

This approach is strongly supported by the senior staff of the Homes for the Aged Division. The pilot project will support learning and improved teamwork and respectful work behaviours at Wesburn Manor and will allow the Division to evaluate the program's applicability in other work locations.

This educational endeavour is seen as a progressive step, with the goal of achieving more informed staff on the topics of workplace respect and workplace bullying and delivering improved workplace behaviours. The management team at Wesburn Manor also strongly

supports the plan, for what it can accomplish in workplace wellness and the enhancement of quality of life for residents and staff.

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SIGNATURE

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