



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

Committee Report

To: Chair and Members of the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee
From: Susan Farrelly, Director of Human Resources
Date: Monday, January 27, 2025
Subject: **Update on Here4Hope CMHAWW Partnership**

Background

In June 2019, County Council approved a three-year partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHAWW) to support the work of promoting life and preventing suicide in Wellington County. The partnership included equal sharing of costs for both the compensation for the Here4Hope Project Lead and programme initiatives and expenses. The partnership agreement was extended, with no change to the terms, in November of 2021 with an expected end date of June 2025.

In January 2023, the partnership was revised resulting in the Here4Hope Project Lead, taking on the role of Manager of Strategic Wellness Initiatives at the County of Wellington. The new manager continued to provide oversight to the Here4Hope project and the management of the Support After Suicide team was assumed by CMHAWW. In this revised partnership agreement, the County invoices CMHAWW for 20% of the manager's compensation (salary and benefits only), representing one day per week. CMHAWW and the County continue to share equally in the costs of Here4Hope events and initiatives.

Here4Hope Partnership Agreement Update

In November 2024, the CMHAWW CEO, informed County staff that CMHAWW was dealing with significant financial pressures necessitating a restructuring of programming and services funded by CMHAWW. As a result, effective immediately, they would not be able to meet the remaining financial obligations of the Here4Hope Partnership Agreement.

Here4Hope has been a successful project and has potential to be restructured and reimaged to continue to provide community-based suicide prevention programming. The County and CMHAWW both feel strongly that the work of promoting life and preventing suicide continues to be a priority. As CMHAWW works towards restructuring programmes and services, they will, with input from the Manager of Strategic Wellness Initiatives, come forward with a proposal for consideration in the Spring of 2025 on the future of Here4Hope and a proposal for County of Wellington's involvement. Life Promotion and Suicide Prevention is the mandate of CMHAWW and the County will at that time evaluate their continued involvement in this newly imagined initiative.

Although CMHAWW is unable to provide funding, they remain committed to providing in-kind support as needed for the County's continuation of this work for the remainder of the agreement. The County has agreed to continue to have the Manager of Strategic Wellness Initiatives work on the project until the end of the agreement in June 2025. During the next six months, the focus will be on the

Here4Hope for men initiative with the goal of raising awareness about men and suicide in Wellington County. We continue to work closely with CMHAWW on Here4Hope initiatives.

Financial Implications

The 2024 budget included a full year of the agreement. Therefore, budgeted financial recovery from the CMHAWW has been reduced by \$35,800 in 2025 to reflect the loss of funding of the programme. A corresponding reduction of \$30,700 has been made to expenses for the programme to reflect the anticipated work on the project in 2025, resulting in an overall minor impact to the County budget in 2025.

Strategic Action Plan

This report relates to the following objectives and priorities in the County's Strategic Action Plan:

- Making the best decisions for the betterment of the Community.

Recommendation:

That the report titled Update on Here4Hope CMHAWW Partnership be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Farrelly
Director of Human Resources

In consultation with/approved by:

Scott Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer
Ken DeHart, County Treasurer