

To: Woodstock City Council

From: Mayor Jerry Acchione

Re: Support for Oxford Ontario Health Team Application for HART Hub

AIM

To seek Council's support of the Oxford Health Team (OHT) application for Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub funding.

BACKGROUND

In August 2024, the Province announced funding of up to \$378 million to support the creation of 19 Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs. Of the 19 HART Hubs that are proposed to be funded, 10 are being implemented through a Call for Proposal process. As determined through the process, the Ministry of Health will provide up to \$6.3 million/year for each Hub to support the ongoing operation of the facility. Of the \$6.3 million/year, \$1.3 million must be utilized to provide clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness with access to supportive housing. Additionally, \$1.8 million will be provided for each Hub to cover one-time start-up costs.

The objective of the HART Hub project is to assess whether several critical services, co-located in the same physical space, offering integrated referral pathways to other local and regional supports, can demonstrate better outcomes for individuals with complex service needs. Overall, each Hub will be able to provide low-barrier access to a range of locally identified services that best meet the complex needs of individuals who experience a range of overlapping issues and marginalization including:

- Homelessness;
- Substance use issues;
- Mental health challenges;
- Social service support needs; and
- Unemployment.

Proposals must identify a not-for-profit Health Service Provider to lead the project. Priority consideration will be given to proposals that demonstrate well-established relationships/partnerships and pathways, as well as access to existing infrastructure (e.g., ability to leverage existing facilities).

COMMENTS

The Oxford OHT is coordinating the HART Hub proposal submission, which is due to the Province by October 18, 2024. This group includes a diverse team of local healthcare providers specializing in mental health and addiction services, social services, justice system partners, and community advisors. Together, the team is committed to addressing the urgent needs of individuals facing homelessness, substance use disorders, and mental health challenges. By offering integrated care, including housing, social services, and primary care, the aim is to reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations, while improving health outcomes and reducing the burden on our local health and social systems.

Locally, we have seen the benefits of taking a collaborative and integrated approach to supporting individuals facing complex social issues through our work on the Mayor's Task Force for Social Well-Being. A successful application for a local HART Hub would have a significant impact in our community by improving care and access to services for people experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental health challenges. Overall, this initiative aligns closely with Woodstock City Council's identified strategic priority action item to:

'Partner to support the development of a campus of services around addiction, mental health, and transitional housing.'

In order to demonstrate Woodstock City Council's commitment to partner and support in the creation of a local HART Hub, I am seeking a formal resolution of support from Council for the Oxford OHT application.

RECOMMENDATION

That Woodstock City Council supports the Oxford Ontario Health Team (OHT) application for Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub funding and authorizes the Mayor to submit a letter of support endorsing the Oxford OHT application.

Authored by: Mayor Jerry Acchione