



REPORT TO: Co-Chairs and Members of
Public Health and Social Services Committee

SUBJECT: Receipt of Aging at Home Funding for Advance Practice Nurse

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommends to Regional Council that:

1. this report be received for information;
2. the Regional Chair and Clerk be authorized to execute any required accountability agreement with the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN) in order to receive the identified funding for Advance Practice Nurse program and additional staff, as applicable; and
3. the additional funding from the LHIN be applied to:
 - a) transition the Advance Practice Nurse program to the Niagara Region's Seniors Services in order to support all 31 long-term care homes in Niagara.
 - b) add 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) of Advance Practice Nurse, as applicable, with the exclusive utilization of HNHB LHIN funding, subject to discussions with the LHIN and the Niagara Health System (NHS).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Regional Council has been apprised of ambulance "off load delays", the long waiting lists for long-term care homes in Niagara, and the large number of patients in local hospitals awaiting placement to alternate facilities or discharge to the community.
- Niagara Region's Seniors Services has been approached by the LHIN to manage an additional Advance Practice Nurse to serve the 31 long-term care homes in the Niagara Region effective July 2008.

- The additional Advance Practice Nurse will help relieve pressure on hospitals and contribute to improving identified system pressures.
- The LHIN has approved the Niagara Region receiving \$86,831 in 2008/09 and \$112,208 annualized for this purpose.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be no additional cost to the Region for this additional resource, as LHIN funding will be exclusively used to cover the cost of salary, benefits and business-related expenses.

PURPOSE

This report summarizes the additional funding received from the HNHB LHIN to expand the existing Advance Practice Nurse program in the Niagara Region.

BACKGROUND

Advance Practice Nurse Program in Niagara

Advance Practice Nurses are registered nurses with extended learning in nursing practice and the ability to practice at an advanced level. For example, an Advance Practice Nurse may assess individuals and prescribe medications and request tests and treatments within specified parameters. These positions complement the role of physicians and can enhance the functions of other registered nurses.

Currently, the NHS employs two Advance Practice Nurses exclusively to support the 31 long-term care homes in Niagara. These positions help prevent avoidable emergency department and inpatient admissions to hospital and expedite discharge back to long-term care homes after acute hospitalization.

Pressures on hospital emergency rooms and on the availability of acute care beds in hospital continue, notwithstanding the existence of the two Advance Practice Nurse positions.

REPORT

Expansion of the Advance Practice Nurse Program

The HNHB LHIN has approved a request for funding to extend the service of an Advance Practice Nurse to week-ends and evenings under the Province's Aging at Home strategy. The approved funding including \$86,831 for 2008/09 and \$112,208 annualized beginning in 2009/10.

Discussions are planned with the NHS and the LHIN by Seniors Services staff to review the smooth transitioning of the program to ensure the Niagara community benefits from this additional funding through enhanced service.

This program enhancement complements other program enhancements approved for Seniors Services by the LHIN (i.e., Alzheimer Respite Companion Program, Alzheimer Overnight Respite at the T. Roy Adams Regional Centre for Dementia Care, Adult Day Service in south Niagara, and Supportive Housing in West Niagara as reported in COM 15-2008, April 1, 2008). The program enhancement, along with the above mentioned and other local program enhancements will contribute to alleviating the identified system pressures and improve health care in Niagara.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Brian Hutchings
Commissioner, Community Services

Mike Trojan
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared by Dominic Ventresca, Director, Seniors Services.