



Report To:	Program Planning Committee
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services
Date:	February 24, 2016
Re:	<b>Transitional Community Support Worker - Issue Report</b>

## **Purpose**

To advise the Board about the partnership pilot project between the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Service Board (DSB).

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, mental illness is increasingly recognized as a serious and growing problem. It is estimated that 1 in 5 Canadians will develop a mental illness at some time in their lives. Many more individuals such as family, friends and colleagues are also affected.

Mental illness is the term used to refer to a variety of mental disorders that can be diagnosed. Mental disorders are health conditions that are characterized by alternations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

Mental health means striking a balance in all aspects of one's life: social, physical, spiritual, economic and mental. At times, the balance may be tipped too much in one direction and one's footing has to be found again. Everyone's personal balance is unique and the challenge is to stay mentally healthy by keeping the right balance.

## **Background**

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB staff have developed a relationship with the Canadian Mental Health Association through a variety of committees at various levels. During recent meetings of the Espanola Health and Community Services Planning Network, a solution to assist with ongoing issues relating to mental health of residents was proposed. Although current resources are helpful, a need for greater services could better assist tenants and help void the gap.

## **Purpose**

The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has identified a need for Mental Health supports for Social Assistance recipients and other residents residing in DSB Social Housing properties in

the LaCloche / Manitoulin areas. As a result of this, a partnership with CMHA has formed to address the need. CMHA currently provides Transitional Community Support services in Sudbury by meeting individuals in their homes or in the community who are at risk of losing their housing or starting to feel unwell and needing additional support services.

## **Outcomes**

The foreseen outcomes for the project are:

- Less landlord/tenant complaints
- Increased retention of tenants – less turnover
- Reduced episodes of hoarding, bed bugs (environmental issues)
- Increased landlord and tenant awareness of community supports available
- Increased referrals to support programs (life skills, education, child care)
- Increased participation in employment/ volunteering and/ or related programs or activities

The intent and purpose of this pilot is for the Transitional Community Support Worker to meet social assistance recipients and other social housing tenants to provide short term supports and housing stabilization through linking individuals to community resources. The Transitional Community Support Worker will be available to residents when the need arises.

The pilot project began in January 2016 with the hiring process. Once the Transitional Community Support Worker is hired late February or early March, they will develop the work plan. The staff will start working with individuals from April 2016 until March 31, 2017.

The funding to provide this service for social assistance recipients and other residents will come from DSB's Ontario Works Employment Support funding envelope and the Northeast LHIN. The estimated cost of the pilot will be \$90,000 and the DSB will fund \$60,000 and the Northeast LHIN through CMHA will fund \$30,000.

The Ontario Works Employment Supports budget (94.2% provincial and 5.8% municipal) included \$37,066 for Mental Health and Addictions. The balance of \$22,934 will be re-allocated within the same funding envelope and staff will ensure the approved budget is maintained.

## **Conclusion**

The program will aim to prevent, address and reduce homelessness by improving access to adequate suitable, affordable housing that is linked to support services based on individual needs.

CMHA will also explore an evaluation process for the program in order to report the findings in early 2017. The evaluation would assess if the pilot should be recommended for implementation into an annualized funded program.