

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Application for Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub Funding – Oxford Ontario Health Team

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Acting Director of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That County Council support the Oxford Ontario Health Team (OHT) application for Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub funding as described in Report HS 2024-11 and authorize the Warden to submit a letter of support, as outlined in the Ministry of Health (MOH) Program Guidelines, endorsing the Oxford OHT application.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) is working in partnership with the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH); Children Community and Social Services (MCCSS); Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD); and Ontario Health (OH), to invest up to \$378M to support a three-year Demonstration Project for Homelessness and Addiction Recovery (HART) Hubs.
- The Oxford OHT submitted an intent to apply for HART Hub funding, with a full submission due by October 18, 2024.
- In order for the Oxford OHT proposal to be considered, a letter of support is required from the County, as Service Manager, to ensure the project aligns with the Housing for All plan, addresses local needs in relation to encampment issues, and fully leverages the coordination of local housing, public health and human services resources/funding.
- For Council's information, a total of 19 HART Hubs are proposed to be funded through the program, to which ten will be implemented through the Call for Proposal process and a separate process will be undertaken to determine the remaining nine.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Upon County Council approval, the Warden will provide a letter expressing County Council’s endorsement of the Oxford OHT HART Hub application.

Financial Impact

The recommendation contained in this report will have no impact on the 2024 budget.

Communications

Upon Council approval, staff will continue to work with the Oxford OHT in support of the formal submission. Staff will also report back to Council with details regarding the outcome of the Oxford OHT application at a later date.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the **2023-2026 Strategic Plan** on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendations in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
Goal 1.1 – 100% Housed Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being		Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

In August 2024, the Province announced funding to support the creation of 19 Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs. Through a Call for Proposals (CFP) process, the Ministry of Health (MOH) is working in partnership with the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH); Children Community and Social Services (MCCSS); Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD); and Ontario Health (OH), to invest up to \$378 million to support a three-year Demonstration Project that would support the creation of these Hubs.

Of the 19 HART hubs that are proposed to be funded, 10 are being implemented through this CFP process, with a separate process to determine the remaining nine. As determined through the CFP process, the MOH will provide up to \$6.3 million/year for each hub, to support the ongoing operation of the facility. Of the total \$6.3 million/year, \$1.3 million must be utilized to provide clients experiencing or at risk of homelessness with access to supportive housing. Furthermore, an additional \$1.8 million will be provided for each Hub to cover one-time start up costs. The Hubs are expected to be fully operating by Winter 2025.

The objective of the HART Hub project is to assess whether a number of 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 and be accountable for any allocated funding. In addition, all proposals must include an endorsement from the local Service Manager, in the form of a supporting letter indicating how the proposal aligns with local supportive housing and social service planning. This will assist to ensure proposals meet local needs, align with local housing and homelessness plans, and fully leverage the coordination of local housing, public health and human services resources and funding. Priority consideration will also 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

HART Hub Proposal Overview

The Oxford OHT is coordinating the HART Hub proposal submission, which is due to the Province by October 18, 2024. This team includes a diverse team of local healthcare providers specializing in mental health and addiction services, local municipalities, social services, justice system partners, and community advisors. Together, the team is committed to addressing the urgent needs of individuals in the County and surrounding rural areas facing homelessness, substance use disorders, and mental health challenges.

The proposed OHT project envisions a comprehensive Hub, ensuring individuals receive coordinated and streamlined services. Overall, the proposed Hub will prioritize the following principles:

- Client-centered recovery-based service delivery model;
- Holistic care emphasizing Social Determinants of Health (SDOH);
- Targets vulnerable populations;
- Seamless care under one roof with easily accessible wrap-around services; and,
- Strong collaboration and partnerships.

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.

Overall, this initiative aligns with key provincial priorities and will assist to alleviate hospital pressures and improve client outcomes. In addition, the project is committed to delivering culturally safe care, particularly for Indigenous and underserved populations, to ensure equity and inclusion in service delivery. The implementation plan will outline milestones, partner roles, and a sustainable service model to provide long-term benefits for the community beyond the initial funding period.

HART Hub Alignment with County Priorities

As previously noted, endorsement from the County, as the Service Manager, is required in support of the Oxford OHT application. With this support, the proposal must meet local needs, align with local housing and homelessness plans including as they relate to addressing encampment issues, and fully leverage the coordination of local housing, public health and human services resources and funding.

In this case, the proposed HART Hub will align with a number of the County's local priorities and strategies including:

- 2023-2026 Strategic Plan;
- 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan: Housing for All;
- Safe and Well Oxford Plan;
- Homelessness Prevention Program Investment Plan;
- Funding and support for the emergency shelter;

- New Initiative NI 2024-10, including in the 2024 budget plan in support of the creation of Supportive Housing and the development of a Homelessness Response Strategy; and,
- The coordinated Access and By Name List system coordination.

The HART hub proposal will support the ongoing work of community partners, Area Municipalities and the County, in providing a step of support for those who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. This initiative will complement and support the ongoing efforts in the homelessness service system, by providing an opportunity to enhance/realign existing supports across the system, while providing crucial step in the area of additional mental health support.

CONCLUSIONS

The community has been working on a proposal for addiction and treatment services in the County for several months and have actively engaged with the MOH staff and Ministers over the past year. A successful application for a local HART Hub would have a significant impact in our communities by addressing homelessness, addiction, and mental health challenges through a collaborative and integrated approach.

SIGNATURES

Departmental approval:

Original signed by

Rebecca Smith, MPA, MCIP, RPP
Acting Director of Human Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer