
TO: Chair and members of the Board of Health

MEETING DATE: June 6, 2018

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Original signed document on file

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Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board of Health:

1. **Receive this report for information.**

Key Points

- On October 5, 2017, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH), AIDS/HIV Resources & Community Health (ARCH) and Sanguen Health Centre collaborated to provide outreach services in Guelph on a Community Health Van (CHV).
- The CHV offers a variety of services including: (i) distribution of food/snacks; (ii) hygiene products; (iii) STI/BBI testing; (iv) medical/social referrals; (v) clothing; and (vi) harm reduction services. Harm reduction includes: (i) needle exchange; (ii) distribution of crack and meth pipes; (iii) naloxone; and (iv) other drug paraphernalia.
- As of March 29, 2018, a total of 1,614 client interactions have occurred through the services provided from the CHV.
- The CHV operates Wednesday and Thursday evenings, in the City of Guelph, with plans to expand to the rural Wellington area in the fall of 2018.

Discussion

WDGPH and ARCH were contacted by Sanguen Health Centre in early 2016 to determine interest in supporting a CHV. Sanguen Health Care suggested that the purpose of the CHV is to eliminate barriers to high risk populations who need access to care and services during non-traditional health and social services agency operating hours.

Supported by both WDGPH and ARCH, Sanguen Health Care submitted a grant request for a CHV to the Ontario Trillium Fund (OTF) in late 2016. The grant application outlined a two (2) year pilot project for a CHV that would help marginalized and vulnerable individuals across Guelph and Wellington County access services, including mental health/addiction support, housing, food access, social services and harm reduction supplies.

Following notification of the success of the OTF grant submission in early 2017, Sanguen Health Centre secured and retrofitted a van, hired a Mobile Outreach Coordinator and launched the first CHV outing in downtown Guelph on Thursday October 5, 2017.

Operating under a Harm Reduction philosophy, the CHV staff target services to those who are homeless, struggling with mental health/addictions issues, living in poverty and those experiencing physical health concerns. The CHV is staffed with nurses, outreach workers, social workers and peer support workers from the three agencies WDGPH, Sanguen Health Centre and ARCH. Services provided to clients include, but not limited to: (i) distribution of food/snacks; (ii) hygiene products; (iii) STI/BBI testing; (iv) needle exchange services (including crack and meth pipes); (v) naloxone; (vi) medical/social referrals; and (vii) clothing.

Despite very little advertising, the CHV experienced many successes on Thursday evening outings. On February 14, 2017, a Wednesday evening outing, in Guelph, was added to the weekly schedule. The Wednesday evening outings attend at locations adjacent to local businesses serving WDGPH's targeted population. There was apprehension that some businesses may react negatively to individuals accessing harm reduction services on the van and refuse to provide services to people utilizing the van's services. As such, advertising was limited to not flag to adjacent businesses the purpose of the van with the result that the CHV saw very few clients. The CHV staff continue to modify the Wednesday evening route to attempt to provide service to the intended targeted audience.

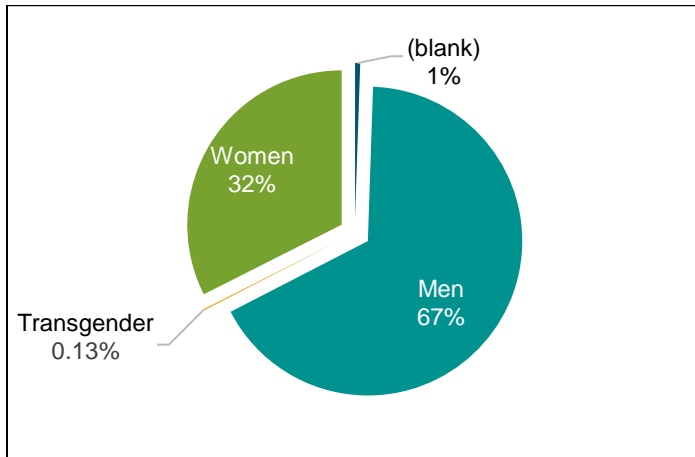
The OTF grant submission included reference to providing CHV service in Wellington County. Preparation has been made for WDGPH, Sanguen and ARCH to meet with the Rural Way (the Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network Wellington Sub-LHIN Region Planning Committee) to initiate planning for the CHV to add a route in the County starting in the fall of 2018.

WDGPH has been influential in developing an evaluation of the CHV and has worked closely with the CHV staff to collect data for analysis. As of March 29, 2018, the CHV reported the following:

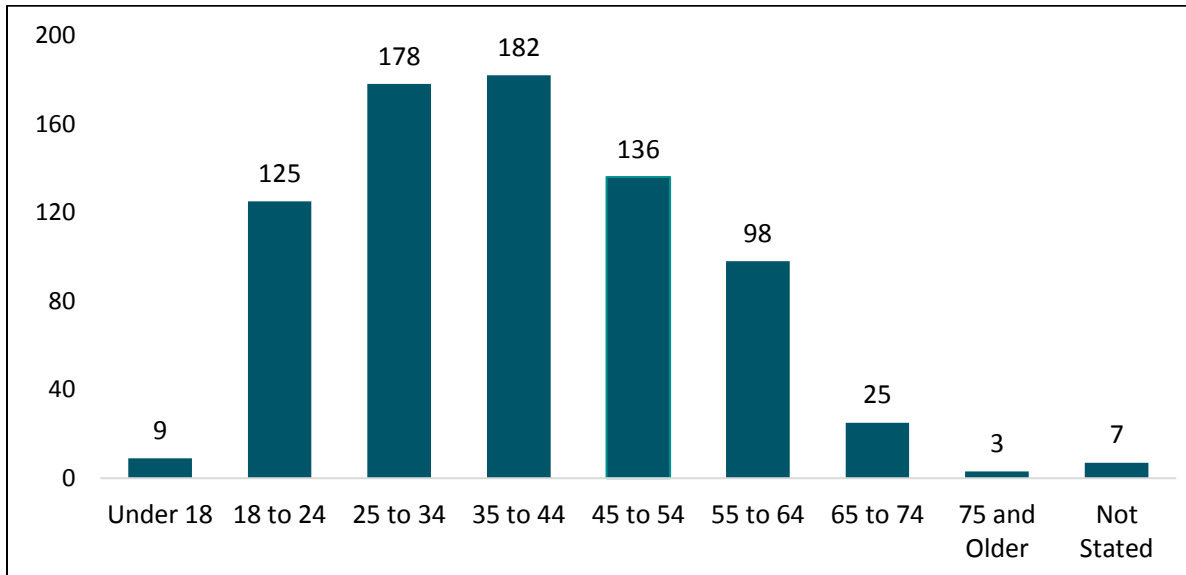
- 746 unique visitors, with an overall total visit volume of 1614.
- 67% male and 32% female clients, no sex was identified for the remaining clients.
- Clients ranged in age from 14 to 76 years of age, with almost half of clients ranging between the ages of 25 – 44 years.

- During this time frame, 69% of visits were to access: (i) food; (ii) hygiene products; and (iii) clothing from the CHV. 19% were to access harm reduction supplies and the remaining visits were to access: (i) both food and hygiene products; (ii) clothing; and (iii) harm reduction supplies.
- Processes for collecting nursing interventions and social/medical referrals is presently being refined.

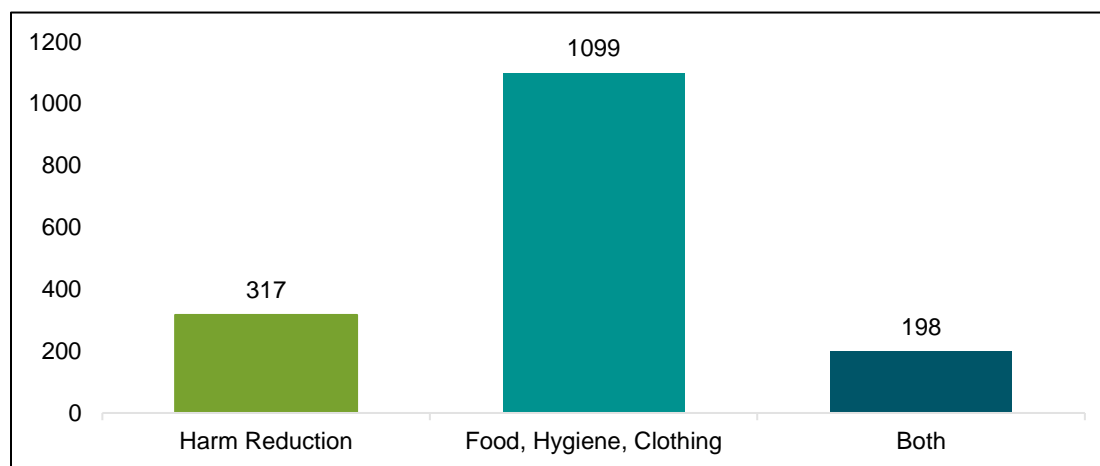
Gender of Unique Visitors



Unique Visitors By Age



Service Accessed by Visit



Conclusion

The CVH is a pilot project supported by ARCH, Sanguen Health Centre and WDGPH that was launched in the fall of 2017. It has reached 746 unique visitors, providing basic needs such as food, clothing, hygiene supplies and access to social/medical interventions and harm reduction supplies to people, in Guelph. Plans for expansion to the rural area of Wellington County will involve key stakeholders to ensure that service is tailored to address gaps or needs of vulnerable individuals in Wellington County.

Ontario Public Health Standard

Health Equity

Public health practice results in decreased health inequities such that everyone has equal opportunities for optimal health and can attain their full health potential without disadvantage due to social position or other socially determined circumstances.

Substance Use and Injury Prevention

To reduce the burden of preventable injuries and substance use.

Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control

To reduce the burden of communicable diseases and other infectious diseases of public health concern.

WDGPH Strategic Direction(s)

- Health Equity:** We will provide programs and services that integrate health equity principles to reduce or eliminate health differences between population groups.
- Organizational Capacity:** We will improve our capacity to effectively deliver public health programs and services.
- Service Centred Approach:** We are committed to providing excellent service to anyone interacting with WDG Public Health.
- Building Healthy Communities:** We will work with communities to support the health and well-being of everyone.

Health Equity

The CHV was established specifically to provide services to marginalized and vulnerable individuals across Guelph and Wellington. The focus of the CHV is to connect with people who are disconnected from traditional community services, with the goal of bringing services to those who would not normally connect with them. Staff on the CHV take a harm reduction approach and support clients with very basic needs, such as food and clothing, and also provide other social/medical interventions or warm referrals (contacting another service on the client's behalf) and providing clients with numbers to call for services. Establishing relationships and providing service in a non-judgmental way encourages clients to make small steps at improving health behaviours.

References

N/A.