



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
FINAL AGENDA

PHSSC 01-2020

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

1:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

| | Pages |
|---|---------|
| 1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u> | |
| 2. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u> | |
| 3. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u> | |
| 3.1 <u>E-Cigarette Update</u> Diana Teng, Manager, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention | 3 - 13 |
| 4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u> | |
| 5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u> | |
| 5.1 <u>PHD 1-2020</u> Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report | 14 - 19 |
| 5.2 <u>COM 1-2020</u> Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2020-21 | 20 - 25 |
| 6. <u>CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u> | |
| 6.1 <u>COM-C 1-2020</u> EarlyON System Transformation Update | 26 - 28 |
| 6.2 <u>CWCD 455-2019</u> 2019 Book Distribution Event | 29 - 31 |

Activities related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness
Action Plan for November and December 2019

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

9. ADJOURNMENT

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).



E-CIGARETTE UPDATE

Public Health and Social Services Committee

January 14, 2020

Agenda

1

Youth Perception

2

Public Health Agency of Canada Investigation

3

Centres for Disease Control & Prevention Investigation

4

Legislative Status

Perceived Risk of Smoking E-Cigarettes Regularly

of Grade 7 to 12 students, in Niagara believe,...



Perceived Risk of Smoking E-Cigarettes Regularly

of Grade 7 to 12 students, in Ontario believe,...

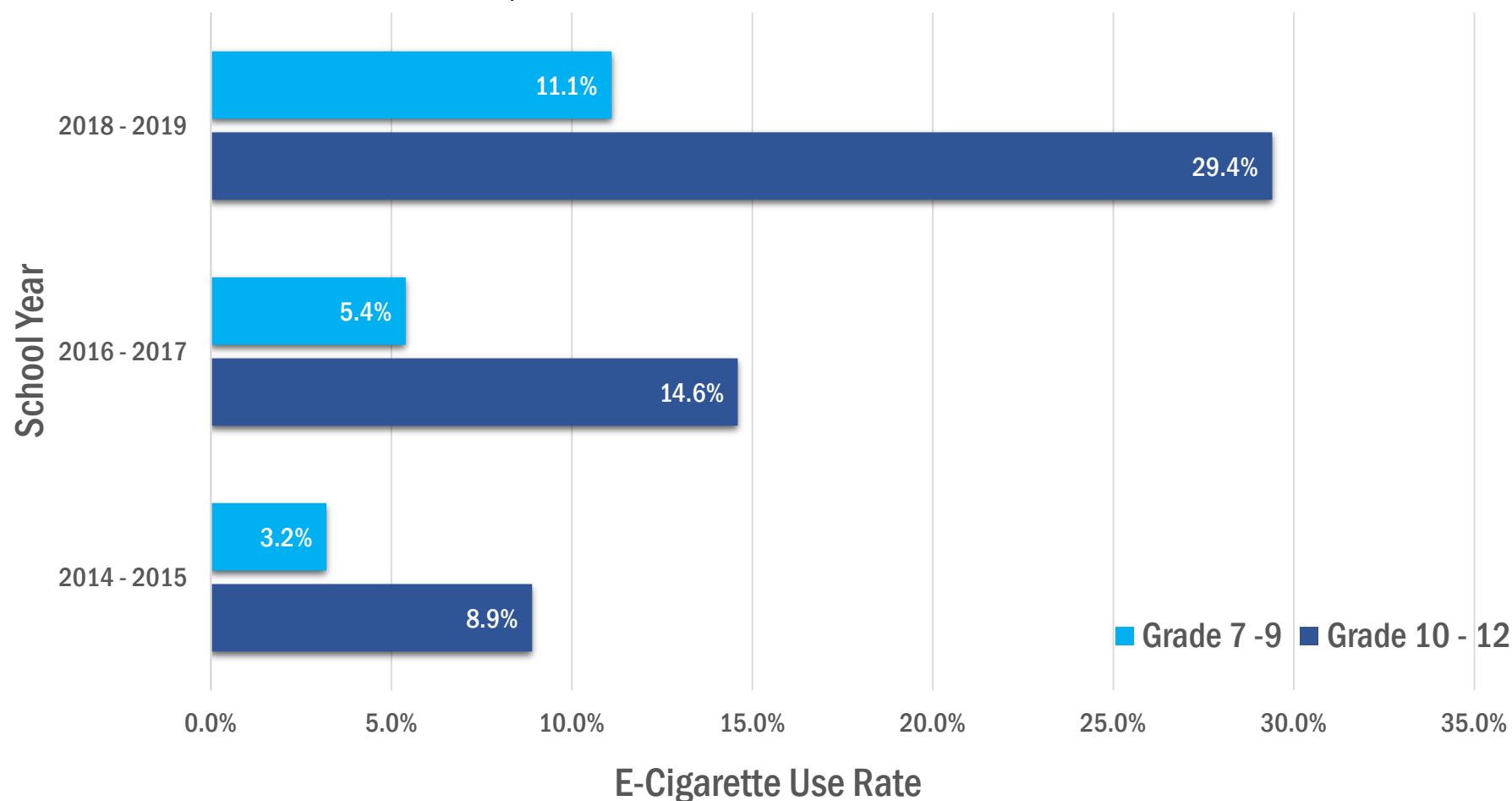
37% there is a slight risk

23% there is a medium risk

19% don't know the risk

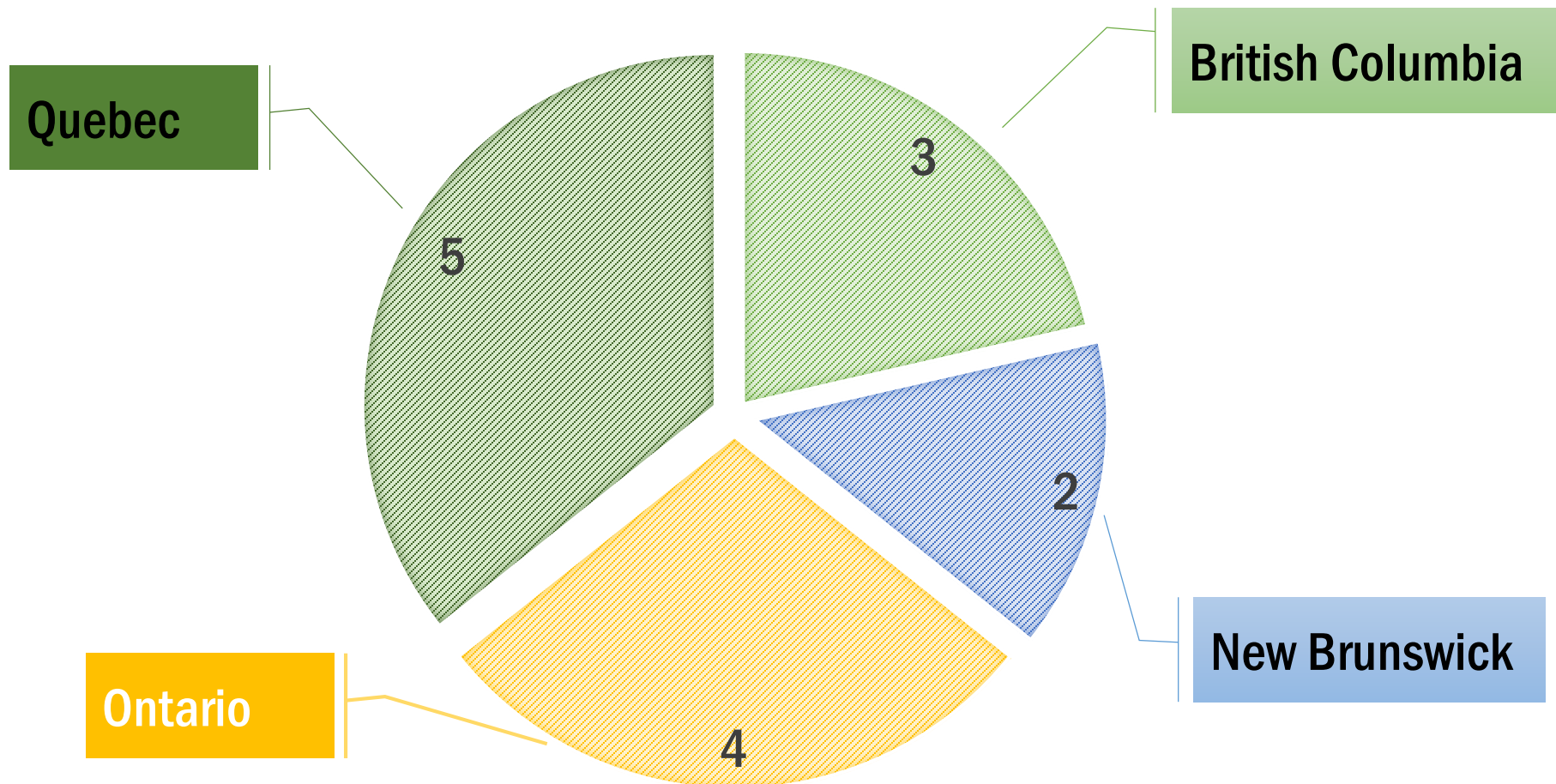
E-Cigarette Use in the past 30 days

of Grade 7 to 12 students, in Canada



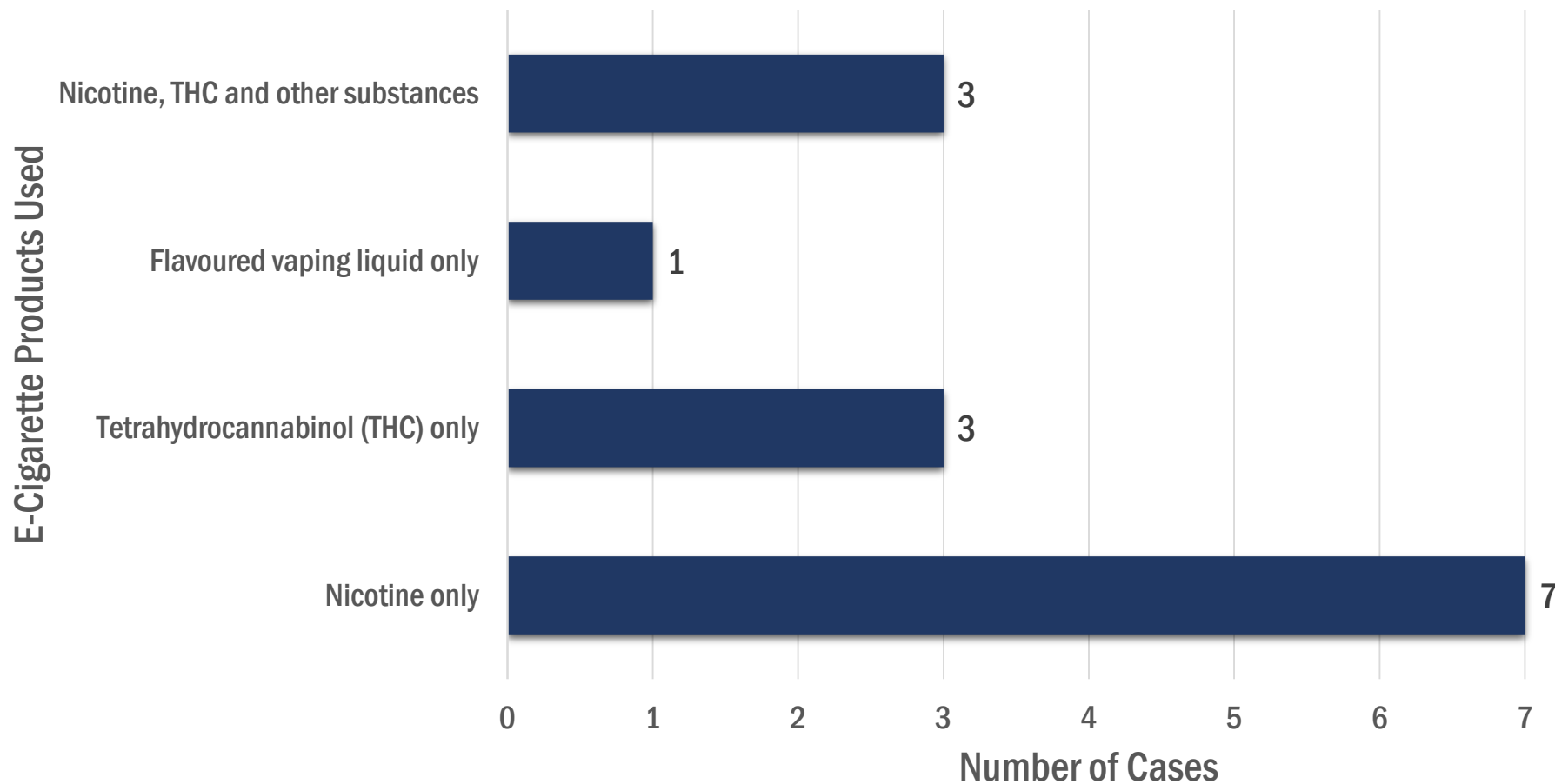
PHAC Investigation

Lung Illness Associated with E-Cigarette Use, in Canada



PHAC Investigation

Lung Illness Associated with E-Cigarette Use



CDC Investigation

Data from December 17, 2019

2,506
hospitalizations

54
deaths

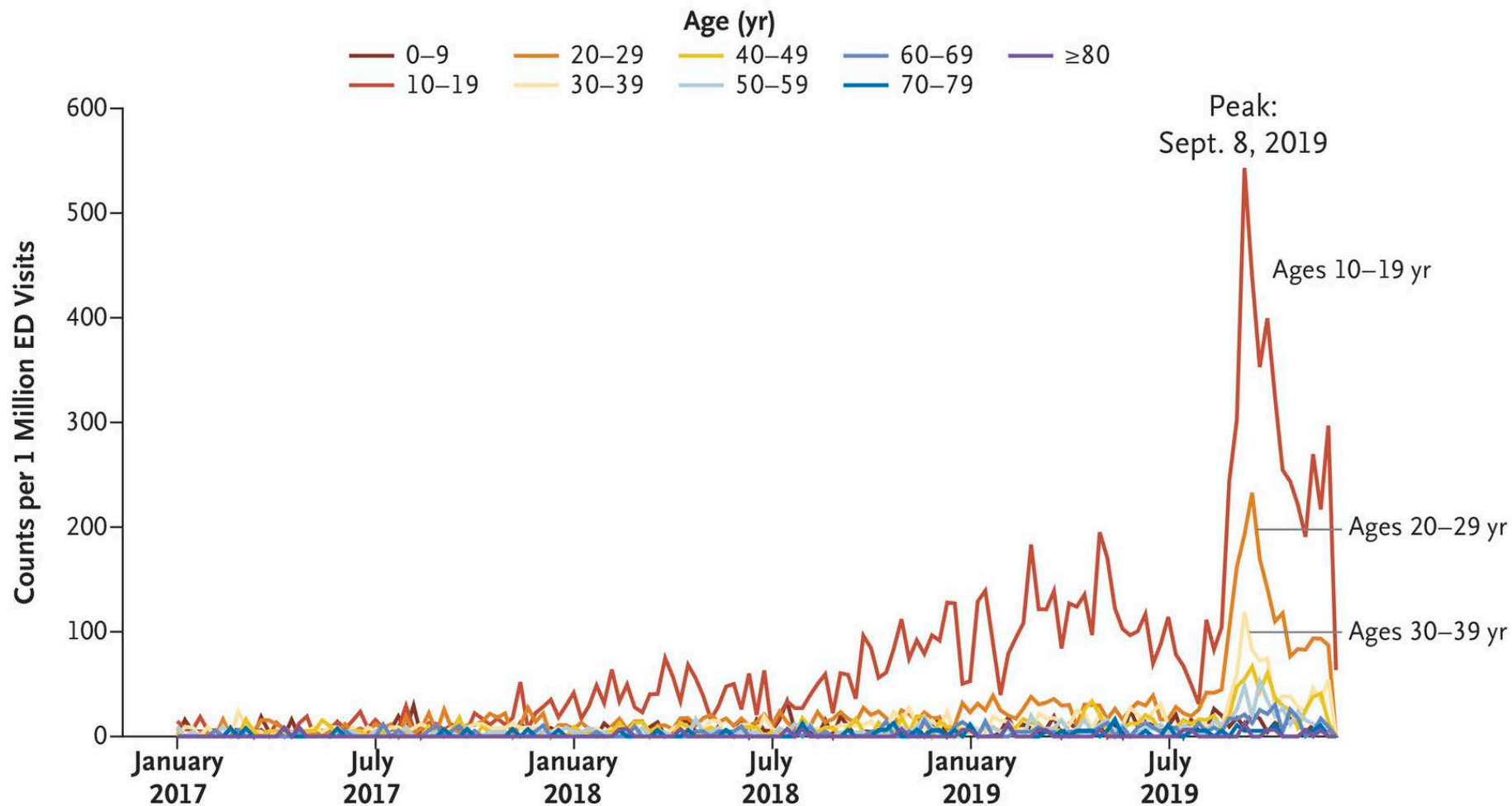
50
states

27
states

Patient Exposure:

Vitamin E acetate
THC
THC sources

CDC Investigation



Legislative Overview



Legislative Opportunities

Provincially

Automatic Prohibition for selling e-cigarettes to minors

Ban flavoured products

Restrict purchases to registered specialty stores

Provide public education



Nationally

Ban flavoured products

Set maximum nicotine concentrations

Plain and stand packaging

Treatment for youth cessation

Subject: Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, January 14, 2020

Recommendations

That Regional Council **APPOINT** the members of the Niagara Region's Municipal Emergency Control Group by position, as required by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

Key Facts

- The Niagara Emergency Management Program is required under the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management's *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act Compliance Guide for Municipalities* to provide an annual report to Council on its activities.
- The *Act* requires the formation and appointment of an Emergency Control Group (ECG) responsible to direct the municipality's response in an emergency, including the implementation of the municipality's emergency response plan.
- The program has had an ECG made up of key identified positions within the Niagara Region as part of its Emergency Plan, however these positions have not historically been appointed by Council.
- This report is intended to ensure compliance with the *Act* and to provide a brief summary of the key activities of the Program in 2019.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications to this report. Emergency Management programming is included within the 2020 Niagara Region Levy Operating Budget.

Analysis

The Niagara Emergency Management program operates in accordance with legislative requirements and staff continuously monitor our compliance with any changes. The Province now requires that members of the Region's Emergency Control Group (referred to as the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) by the Province) be appointed by Council. Section 12 of the *Act* states:

Municipal emergency control group:

12. (1) Every municipality shall have a municipal emergency control group. *O. Reg. 380/04*, s. 12 (1).

- (2) The emergency control group shall be composed of,
- (a) such officials or employees of the municipality as may be appointed by the council; and
 - (b) such members of council as may be appointed by the council. *O. Reg. 380/04, s. 12*

An annex to the Region's Emergency Plan has been developed to list these positions.

These positions (or their designated alternates) are:

- Niagara Region CAO
- Commissioner Enterprise Resource Management Services
- Commissioner Public Works
- Commissioner Community Services
- Commissioner Planning & Development Services
- Commissioner Public Health and Emergency Services/Medical Officer of Health
- Director/Chief Emergency Medical Services (serves as Chief Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC))
- Director, Transportation Services
- Associate Director Strategic Communications and Public Affairs

A recommendation is provided for Council to endorse this list and thereby appoint its members.

This past year the Region's Emergency Management Program participated in a number of emergencies that occurred across the municipality.

Incidents and Responses

As of November 25, 2019, activation levels for the Niagara Region EOC were developed. These activation levels include:

- Routine monitoring
- Enhanced monitoring
- Partial activation
- Full activation.

In 2019 (as of December 23, 2019), the following numbers of incidents required activation by Niagara Region:

- Enhanced monitoring: 39 incidents
- Partial activation: 5 incidents
- Full activation: 0 incidents

Assistance to Local Municipalities

Niagara Region Emergency Management provided assistance as requested to local municipalities for a variety of purposes including emergency response to the Greenhouse Fire in St. Catharines and the October 31st windstorm that affected Port Colborne, Wainfleet and Fort Erie. Emergency information was provided to the Community Emergency Management Coordinators of the 12 municipalities for a number of potential hazardous events to ensure that they were supported. In addition, support to local municipalities was provided in training, public education and the development and review of hazard identification and risk assessment materials.

Emergency Management Committee

With the formation of the new Regional Council in early 2019, Councillor Tom Insinna was appointed as Council's representative on the Emergency Management Committee. This Committee met on three occasions on the following dates; January 15th, May 21st, and September 24th. Topics of discussion included the Region's Emergency Management Program, emergency notification software, incidents experienced in Niagara in 2019, the Building a Disaster Resilient Niagara Symposium, training, public education, flooding, and the Province's request for Host Communities. Minutes were circulated to all Committee members.

Training

The Province has created a new Instructor Certification Program for teaching Provincial Emergency Management Courses. The Emergency Management Program Specialist was identified as part of the Province's pilot project for instructor training to provide input and has been fully certified. The new Emergency Management Program Advisor is participating in the process to become certified up to Incident Management System (IMS) 200 level.

All Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) staff are required to attend annual training under the *Emergency Management & Civil Protection Act (EMCPA)*. A variety of training opportunities were held for both new and experienced EOC staff members with the goal of enhancing emergency preparedness and response. The number of total staff trained increased in 2019 with more than 97 regional staff receiving training by taking at least one of the multiple courses offered. A basic introductory online course to emergency management was developed and rolled out to staff. This course is targeted at staff who are new to filling an EOC position. Three sessions of IMS 200 training with fifty people from both the Region and the Municipalities were held on March 25th - 26th, September 18th - 19th, and October 22nd - 23rd. A single session of Basic Emergency Management (BEM) training was held on May 8th - 9th, as requested by municipalities. A combined exercise and training session was held for all EOC staff to ensure familiarity with the Everbridge notification system and the Facility Closure Plan. While a new in-house

scribe course is being developed, Niagara Region Emergency Management partnered with the Ontario Association of Emergency Managers to run two sessions of scribe training as a temporary measure until the new training is ready for release. Both sessions were sold out and a total of 48 people attended. More than 202 people attended at least one session of Emergency Management training in 2019.

To advance the training program forward and to ensure a quality learning experience, in addition to a new scribe course, the province's IMS 200 course is undergoing a redesign by Niagara Region Emergency Management to better meet the needs of Niagara. This redesign will be submitted to the Province for approval.

In addition, a training schedule for 2020 has been developed to help guide EOC staff in achieving the desired level of training.

Public Education

Public education is a key function of emergency management programs and is mandated under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. A variety of public education initiatives were undertaken in 2019 intended to reach more people. Initiatives included:

- A two-page article on Preparedness and Hazards in Niagara featured on the front page of the Welland Tribune on April 30th.
- Emergency Management booths at Regional Headquarters, Niagara College and the St. Catharines Market on May 6th, 7th, and 9th. More than 225 people were engaged and the outreach was well received.
- Partnering with the Red Cross to provide Household Emergency Preparedness presentations and hand out 72 Hour Guides to retirement home residents, families, and staff. An additional 80 guides were provided to the Respite Caregivers for clients and families.
- Hosting an Environment Canada CANWARN Storm Spotter Training session on May 8th. More than 100 people attended this session. In addition to hosting, Emergency Management also had a display and distributed 72 Hour booklets.
- 72 Hour booklets were given out to the municipalities and were available to the public and staff year round at Regional headquarters.
- Additional emergency management presentations were given to other partners including schools, universities and others upon request.
- The Emergency Management Program website was refreshed with the help of Strategic Communications & Public Affairs and now contains information on preparedness, hazards in Niagara, and the emergency plan.

Symposium

The Region's Emergency Management Program continued to co-chair the Building a Disaster Resilient Niagara Symposium, which was held on January 18, 2019 with more than 250 people in attendance. Presentation topics included the emergency responses to the Ottawa Tornadoes, the Humboldt Broncos Bus Crash, the Casino Vehicle Intrusion Incident, and the joint exercise between Grimsby and Lincoln. This event provided education on emergency management in Niagara for emergency managers, first responders, senior management, and other important emergency management stakeholders. Work has been ongoing in 2019 to plan for the 2020 symposium, which will be held on March 13, 2020.

Planning

The former Severe Weather Plan was reviewed and redesigned into the Emergency Facility Closure Plan based on the needs of the Region and best practices. This plan was a key component of the training and exercise requirements for EOC staff in 2019. The Emergency Drinking Water Plan was finalized with input from multiple Regional departments including Water/Wastewater, Emergency Social Services, and Public Health. The Niagara Region Emergency Response Plan was reviewed as required for annual compliance.

EOC Readiness and Annual Exercise

A discussion based exercise approach was selected for the 2019 exercise requirement. Four exercise sessions were made available to all EOC staff (primaries and alternates). All EOC staff actively participated in a session. The exercise explored the needs of staff to respond virtually during an emergency that prohibited them from traveling to a physical EOC (e.g. a snowstorm). The exercise was well received and opportunities to strengthen EOC processes and increase resiliency.

Due to the activities mentioned above, the Region's Emergency Management Program is well on track to meet and exceed the compliance requirements under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* for 2019. The program continues to strive for excellence in emergency management.

Alternatives Reviewed

The Emergency Management program is constantly assessing priorities and best methodologies for service delivery. With the completion of the provincial municipal review, it is essential for the Emergency Program to best understand the role and support required for each local municipality relevant to the Region's provision of such support. In Q1 of 2020, a recommendation will be made to the Regional Emergency Management Program Committee to undertake a full program review focused on an

evidence-based approach and best practices for the continuance of emergency management services at both the regional and local levels. This review will enable Niagara Region to become a leader in emergency management in Ontario and will increase Niagara's resilience to disasters and emergencies. The 2020 review will help to guide the way to a fully operational program based on best practices.

Other Pertinent Reports

PHD 14-2016 Amendments to the Niagara Emergency Management Program

Prepared by:

Kevin Smith

Chief, Niagara Emergency Medical Services & Director, Emergency Services
Public Health & Emergency Services

Recommended by:

M. Mustafa Hirji, MD, MPH, FRCPC

Medical Officer of Health & Commissioner (Acting)
Public Health & Emergency Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.

Chief Administrative Officer (Acting)

Subject: Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2020-21
Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee
Report date: Tuesday, January 14, 2020

Recommendations

That the Ministry mandated Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative investment plan for the 2020-21 funding allotment, **BE APPROVED.**

Key Facts

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) provided notification on April 17, 2019 of funding allocations for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI), which included the year 2020-21.
- Based on the April 17, 2019 notice, Niagara will receive \$7,847,786 per annum for the two-year term April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2022.
- Consistent with previous years, MMAH requires service managers to submit the CHPI investment plan for 2020-21 by February 15, 2020 outlining the planned spending in the directed categories of: emergency shelter solutions, housing with related supports, other services and supports, homelessness prevention and program administration.
- The proposed Investment Plan included in the report has been developed based on the CHPI program guidelines (January 2017), in alignment with Niagara's recently updated Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and with consideration to existing funding allocations to support a stable homelessness system in Niagara.
- In 2018, homelessness services in Niagara assisted 464 unique households through outreach, 1,835 with emergency hostel services, 2,162 with prevention services, and 258 with supportive housing services.

Financial Considerations

The total 100% provincial CHPI funding provided for 2020-21 is anticipated to be \$7,847,786. It should also be noted that Niagara Region is allocating \$2,589,233 of levy funding to the same priority funding categories beyond the proposed provincial amounts (assuming a consistent levy allocation in Q1 2021). Niagara Region also receives \$941,096 of Federal funding for Reaching Home (largely to fund Housing First programs, and to support Coordinated Access and Built for Zero participation) and \$750,490 in Provincial funding for Home for Good (intensive supportive housing). These other funding sources are not included in the CHPI investment plan prepared for the MMAH.

Current homelessness service contracts expire March 31, 2020. Niagara Region funds and works collaboratively with 22 agencies to deliver homelessness services to the residents of Niagara. Niagara Region is currently in the process of reviewing Negotiated Request for Proposal (RFP) submissions for each of the CHPI categories and will work to have contract awards align with the CHPI investment plan for 2020-21, subject to submissions received.

Analysis

The proposed CHPI investment plan is designed to align with the CHPI program guidelines issued in January 2017 (revised May 2019). The Ministry requires that an investment plan be submitted each year indicating how Niagara Region plans to use the funding provided based on the categories identified by the province, and additionally, recognizing the four provincial homelessness priorities of chronic homelessness, youth, Indigenous persons and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems.

The vision for CHPI is to have “A coordinated and holistic service delivery system that is people-centered, evidence informed and outcomes-based, and reflects a Housing First approach that focuses on homelessness prevention and reduces reliance on emergency services.”¹ This vision reflects a shift towards a system that focuses on proactive and permanent housing solutions rather than reactive responses to homelessness.

The chart below shows the funding plan submitted for 2018-19, 2019-20, the proposed plan to be submitted for 2020-21 and the changes in funding allocations, over the prior year.

2020-21 CHPI INVESTMENT PLAN

| | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | Change |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Emergency Shelter Solutions | \$2,186,223 | \$2,421,799 | \$2,753,623 | \$331,824 |
| Housing with Related Supports | \$1,071,155 | \$956,155 | \$852,179 | (\$103,976) |
| Other Services and Supports | \$178,592 | \$314,016 | \$397,521 | \$83,505 |
| Homelessness Prevention | \$3,811,701 | \$3,555,701 | \$3,555,701 | \$0 |

¹ Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Program Guidelines, January 2017, Ministry of Housing.

| | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | Change |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Program Administration | \$288,762 | \$288,762 | \$288,762 | \$0 |
| Total | \$7,536,433 | \$7,536,433 | \$7,847,786 | \$311,353 |

The relative amounts set out in Niagara's investment plan align with provincial expectations, and ensure funding levels in each category support stability in the Niagara homelessness system while allowing for the capacity to move the system forward in achieving provincially identified priorities. The types of services that will be funded under the CHPI categories, as well as some specific work related to system improvements, are outlined below:

Emergency Shelter Solutions

- Funding would support: a low barrier, safe bed, offered in a variety of settings, necessary basic needs, and meals, along with support services including transportation to the shelter.
- Shelter providers will operate using a Housing Focused philosophy in the delivery of services, and utilize Shelter Diversion practices building off the successful youth shelter diversion pilot offered in 2019.
- Funding increase provides dollars for more beds in the shelter system and additional funding for hotel rooms to address Emergency Shelter overflow, and to accommodate special needs (e.g. accessibility, service animals, and health and safety concerns). In addition, funding provides for an After Hours service to assist clients when shelters are at capacity.
- Staff continue to monitor the impact of the implementation of best practice Housing First and Home for Good Supportive Housing programming, as well as Shelter Diversion, on shelter stays, in reducing demand for emergency shelters.
- There will be continued focus and effort to align with provincial policy expectations, emphasizing prevention over emergency responses.

Housing with Related Supports

- Consistent with best practices, funding will support Housing First units and, where appropriate, transitional housing programming in Niagara. These critical programs aim to increase housing stability, and reduce reliance on emergency shelters.
- Funded services will also include case management to assist clients with access to medical needs, supports related to mental health, substance use, and crisis intervention. Coordinated Access to these resources is another key component in Niagara's work associated with Built for Zero.
- Landlord engagement, to assist in finding community-based units, is also addressed in this category.

Other Services and Supports

- This category captures Niagara's outreach services, including assertive street outreach support workers who provide help to find stable housing, and connections to other services including mental health programs, healthcare, addictions services, and legal aid. Assertive Street Outreach is another key component in Niagara's movement to its improved 'System 2.0' and work associated with Built for Zero.

Homelessness Prevention

- Homelessness Prevention funding supports programs which address eviction prevention, assistance to secure (most critical for those exiting shelter) and retain housing, and assistance with budgeting, banking, and trusteeship.
- This category also funds programs specific to vulnerable youth and young adults who are at risk of homelessness to keep them housed and avert their entry into the system.
- This category includes the Housing Stability Plan (HSP), which as in prior years, is an important component of the Homelessness Prevention program. HSP provides financial assistance for rent arrears, and rent deposits (quite helpful for those leaving shelter), and can assist with diversion efforts.
- This category also includes funding towards the Niagara Emergency Energy Fund to address utility arrears in order to support clients to retain housing.
- Niagara Region, in alignment with provincial direction, continues to emphasize prevention programs to reduce the need for emergency shelters, facilitate rapid rehousing efforts and support people to access and retain stable housing.

Program Administration

- Funding supports capacity building and training for staff and leaders at all third party agencies delivering programs.
- While permitted under the Administration category, Niagara Region does not allocate the full 10% available under the CHPI guidelines for administration, focusing as much funding as possible to direct client service delivery.

Risk Management planning for CHPI

Under the CHPI program guidelines (January 2017), there is a requirement to identify potential risks and mitigation strategies.

The risks that will be identified in this investment plan include:

| RISKS | MITIGATION |
|---|--|
| ➤ Effectively meeting the provincially mandated capacity, assessment and development requirements for | ➤ Continue to monitor the sector for best practice developments and evolving policy changes. |

| RISKS | MITIGATION |
|--|---|
| municipal service managers and all third party agencies delivering programs on our behalf (particularly as the province has not yet shared expectations and targets for this requirement). | ➤ Continue to allocate administration monies to this initiative and work with all agencies to identify system wide training needs, ensuring system capacity along with standard processes. Plans for 2020 include further Housing First training. |
| ➤ An affordability risk in Niagara, as the provincial funding available remains inadequate to support local needs and address existing demand for services. Ongoing reliance on the local not-for-profit sector contributions and levy sources is not sustainable. | ➤ Local funding allocations and contract award processes seek to ensure that selected agencies utilize outcome-based models and best practices. Niagara Region will continue to ensure effective monitoring of contracts and outcomes. Dialogue will continue with MMAH related to local needs and relative funding levels. |

Alternatives Reviewed

N/A.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This recommendation is aligned to Council's strategic priority of ensuring a "Healthy and Vibrant Community." By approving this report, Niagara Region is able to receive this provincial funding and support clients through the stages of the housing continuum

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 08-2015 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Funding Allocations 2015-16 and 2016-17
- COM 02-2017 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2017-18
- COM 02-2018 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2018-19
- COM 01-2019 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2019-20

Prepared by:

Cathy Cousins, CPA, CA
Director, Homelessness Services &
Community Engagement
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist.

MEMORANDUM**COM-C 1-2020**

Subject: EarlyON System Transformation Update
Date: January 14, 2020
To: Public Health and Social Services Committee
From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

As of January 1, 2018, Niagara Region Children's Services became responsible for the local planning and administration of EarlyON Child and Family Centres, on behalf of the province. Niagara Region Children's Services has been charged to locally implement the provincial vision of an integrated and coordinated early years system, with seamless transitions between programs and services that support early learning and healthy child development.

At the initiation of this new responsibility, as a short-term strategy, Niagara Region Children's Services entered into temporary service agreements with existing service providers to allow for a period of local planning, analysis and review of provincial policy. As part of the local planning, a needs assessment and environmental scan was completed in 2017. Throughout 2018, ongoing planning, data collection, and community engagement with key stakeholders (children and their parents and caregivers, service providers, and staff) was used to inform a procurement framework and process.

As a step toward implementing the provincial vision, Niagara Region Children's Services issued a (Negotiated) Request for Proposals (NRFP) to help identify service providers that would support the transition and transformation of the existing EarlyON service system to be aligned with the Ministry of Education expectations within provincial budget allocations.

With the recent conclusion of the NRFP process for EarlyON service delivery in Niagara, the successful proponents are:

| Agency/Organization | Zone(s) |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| District School Board of Niagara | Zone 10 |
| | |
| Niagara Catholic District School Board | Zone 8, 11 and 13 |
| | |
| Port CARES | Zone 1, 2, 3, 9 12, 14, 15 and 16 |
| | |
| YMCA of Niagara | Zone 4, 5, 6 and 7 |

These agencies/organizations will operate an EarlyON Child and Family Centre in one (1) or more of the sixteen (16) service zones across Niagara, and participate in a new integrated early years system.

Appendix 1 offers a map that provides more detailed information regarding the service zones where each service provider will operate an EarlyON Centre.

In order to ensure minimal disruptions to service, Niagara Region Children's Services allocated funding to support a six-month transition period for sites as required. This will allow for the continued operation of a number of impacted sites while Niagara transitions to the new system. The six months will also allow for adequate planning regarding any changes to staffing, locations, and hours of operation.

Niagara Region Children's Services, in its role as service system manager, will continue to work closely with the successful proponents to ensure EarlyON services are accessible in all communities, increasing hours of service where appropriate, ensuring locations are well situated and utilized, and delivering the EarlyON service system within the current provincial funding available.

Niagara Region looks forward to working with EarlyON services providers, municipalities, educators, community agencies and parents/caregivers to ensure EarlyON Child and Family Centres continue to provide quality programs and services that meet community needs, and support the healthy development and learning of children across Niagara.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

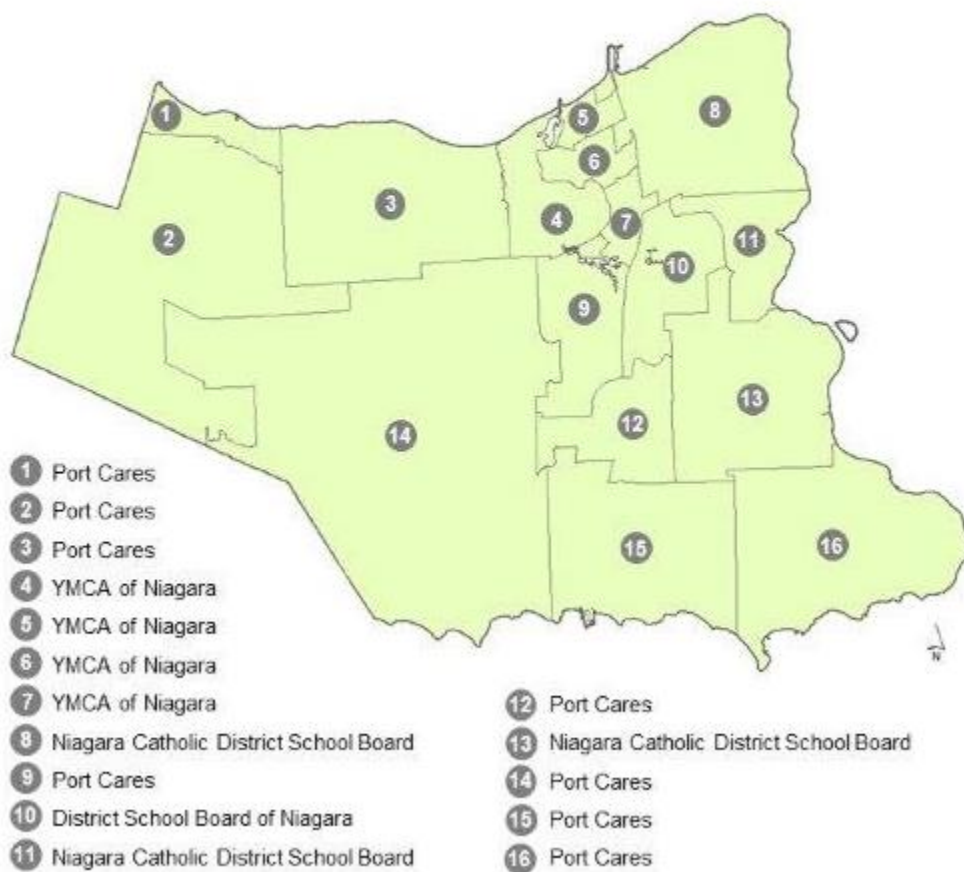
Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner

Appendix 1 EarlyON Service Zones awarded

Appendix 1

COM C 1-2020
January 14, 2019

Niagara Region EarlyON Child and Family Centre Service Zones
with Successful Service Delivery Agencies



MEMORANDUM

CWCD 455-2019

Subject: 2019 Book Distribution Event

Date: December 6, 2019

To: Regional Chair and Council

From: Darlene Edgar, RECE, Director Children's Services

Since 2017, Niagara Region Children's Services has been collaborating with First Book Canada, a registered Canadian charity which acts as a clearinghouse for large-scale book donations from publishing companies. Every May and November, Children's Services plans and hosts a book distribution event, with new, unused books, appropriate for different age groups, from infants to children 18 years of age. The books provided by First Book Canada are distributed through hundreds of representatives from a multitude of local schools, agencies and organizations serving low-income children and youth from families across the region.

Over the last few years the book distribution events have grown substantially and have created a "book dependency" in Niagara. However, at the same time, the number of books that Niagara Region Children's Services was able to secure from First Book Canada has declined, due to the increasing needs in communities across Canada. Children's Services reached out to the local retail store 'The Book Outlet', located in St. Catharines, to inquire if the store would like to consider donating books. The Book Outlet generously donated over 200,000 new, unused books.

In addition to the 200,000 books donated by The Book Outlet, 75,000 books were provided by First Book Canada. In the end, the Niagara Book Distribution Event, held the week of November 11 to 15, 2019, had nearly 280,000 books to be given to children and youth in need across Niagara.

The event was also made possible through the generous support of local businesses: Seaway Mall provided free storage space and the event locale; and Fontaine Trucking of Port Colborne, provided transportation for the books to Niagara. As well, Children's Services wishes to acknowledge the numerous volunteers who donated their time to help set-up for the event.

Including the recent book distribution event, there have been five (5) such events, helping to put approximately 600,000 new, unused books in the hands of children and youth across Niagara. The total value of these books has been conservatively estimated at \$6.5million dollars.

The following examples provided by community agencies, programs and services demonstrate how the book distribution events have made an impact in the community.

- Family & Children's Services of Niagara: Families receiving assistance are visited by Caseworkers who bring donated books with them on home visits. Since Caseworkers often discover there is very little, or at times nothing for the child to play with, they can now leave a book behind for each child.
- Public Health Nurses: Nurses visit parents with new born babies in their homes and leave a book behind to encourage reading and connecting with the baby.
- Holy Trinity Food & Hygiene Bank: Last December they put out a selection of books and wrapping paper and encouraged visitors to select and wrap a book as a gift for their family members. One grandfather broke down in tears, thankful that he now had gifts to give his grandchildren.
- Adult Literacy and Credit Programs: The books are used for reading projects and allow clients to take home books as gifts for their families.
- Public Health's Mobile Dental Clinic: Staff share books with children coming in for a dental appointment so they can read while they wait and bring the book home.
- Children's Services: When Fee Subsidy Caseworkers meet with families who are applying for financial assistance for their child care costs, families pick from a selection of books for their children to keep.

Children's Services is committed to working with local businesses and not-for-profit organizations to support Niagara families and their children in creating home libraries. Language development in the first 5 years of a child's life is crucial, with parents as their children's first teacher playing a critical role in supporting their child's early literacy. Language and communication provide the tools necessary for learning, engaging in social relationships and the ability to self-regulate emotions.

Respectfully submitted and signed by



Darlene Edgar, RECE
Director, Children's Services
Appendix 1. Letter of Thanks from First Book Canada



Darlene Edgar
Director, Children's Services
Niagara Region
P.O. Box 344
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 3Z3

November 19th, 2019

Dear Darlene,

We want to thank you for all your help with the Niagara Regional Pop-Up and Reading Celebration this week. First Book Canada is committed to providing equal access to high-quality books and educational resources to educators and children in low-income areas, and we couldn't do that without you.

The Niagara Region's generosity, commitment and support of such a massive project is greatly appreciated and it does not go unnoticed. Karen Schmidt did an amazing job directing the entire event and her dedication to its execution was second to none. She was an invaluable asset throughout the entire week. Every aspect of the event, from visiting the elementary school classes to the distribution of over 280,000 books will make a huge impact on the teachers, students, libraries and other groups serving children in need around the Niagara Community and across Southwestern Ontario.

So, from First Book Canada, thank you for taking the time to help us in our mission, provide books to hundreds of groups who need them, and give kids an opportunity to reach their full potential. Please also thank Karen and all your staff who volunteered last week for all their hard work and special efforts to make the whole event and school visits so successful.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Best".

Tom Best,

Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

COM-C 2-2020

Subject: Activities related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for November and December 2019

Date: January 14, 2020

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Jeff Sinclair, Homelessness Action Plan Advisor and Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

Further to council direction in October (COM 40-2019), staff will provide regular updates about activities, local targets, outcomes and challenges related to Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), as new information is available.

The following highlights activities related to the HHAP in November and December 2019:

- The updated 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan was submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. Regional Council approved this plan in October 2019, pending Ministry approval. At the direction of Council, staff are preparing an information session about the updated action plan for Regional Councillors, and a presentation to be offered to local municipal councils in 2020.
- Through agency visits, and the launch of Niagara's inaugural Built for Zero Partner Newsletter in November 2019, staff provided information to homelessness service providers about the Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C) initiative and its role in ending chronic homelessness in Niagara.
- The BFZ-C Home Team selected two areas of focus for the first half of 2020, to be initiated at the BFZ-C learning session for participating communities in Toronto in January 2020:
 - Mapping and coordinating street outreach
 - Promoting provider participation in common assessment.
- Niagara Region hosted a presentation by Iain De Jong to nearly 300 attendees, including elected officials, service providers and other stakeholders, at the Scotiabank Centre on December 19, 2019. Mr. De Jong, an internationally recognized expert on ending homelessness, challenged commonly held assumptions, debunked myths about homelessness and provided insight about effective evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness in the Canadian context.

- The tendering process to select providers for homelessness services in alignment with the revised system model during 2020-2022 continues, with submissions closed for four of six service categories:

| Service Category | Status |
|--|--|
| Emergency Shelter | Bidding closed, proposals under review |
| Street Outreach | Bidding closed, proposals under review |
| Prevention | Bidding closed, proposals under review |
| Housing with Supports – Transitional Housing | Bidding closed January 7, 2020 |
| Housing First | Bidding closes January 16, 2020 |
| Home for Good | Bidding closes January 16, 2020 |

- The tendering process for a Regional investment of \$1.7 million in affordable housing through a joint venture model continues. Bidding closed in October 2019 and submitted proposals are currently under review.
- Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) hosted ONPHA's (Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association) Ready Set (re)Build training over two days in December 2019. Local non-profits, cooperatives, church groups, and a private sector participant attended to learn about how to successfully develop or redevelop affordable housing.
- In November, 12 households from the centralized housing waitlist moved into the newly completed units at Roach Avenue in Welland.
- Gateway Residential and Support Services (Gateway) prepared to accept 18 new Home for Good supportive housing clients experiencing chronic homelessness, into program spaces that will be available starting December 2019 through to February 2020. Eight of these clients will be housed at Gateway's new supportive housing facility in Port Colborne and 10 will be housed in Niagara's rental market with rent subsidy, case management and other more intensive supports. Clients were prioritized for access to these new program spaces through a process which incorporated components of coordinated access and common assessment of need in alignment with BFZ-C. These are significant steps in Niagara's effort to end chronic homelessness.
- Demolition began in December 2019 at the NRH Hawkins Street site in Niagara Falls, where intensification will add 62 net new community housing units (for a total of 74 units) with a target completion of summer 2021.

Respectfully submitted and signed by:

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Commissioner