



Community and Health Services Department
Office of the Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: Members of Committee of the Whole

FROM: Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

DATE: November 3, 2016

RE: **York Region Health and Wellbeing Mid-Year Review 2016**

I am pleased to provide York Region Health and Wellbeing Mid-Year Review 2016, intended to provide an overview of the key trends shaping Community and Health Services Department's service delivery as related to the York Region 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan: From Vision to Results.

In the first half of 2016, the Region continued to experience steady population growth and increasing housing prices, service demands and client needs complexity. This report demonstrates the Department's success addressing these challenges, achieved by innovative approaches to service delivery such as broader community engagement, outreach and partnerships. Examples of success include the Community Investment Strategy, breastfeeding and parenting programs and Housing Services engagements. Going forward, broader corporate initiatives such as the development of the Seniors Strategy and a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy represent new opportunities to address evolving needs.

We will continue to monitor key trends and their impacts on the Community and Health Services Department's programs and services and provide Council with an update on the full 2016 calendar year in spring 2017.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

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Attachment (1)

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York Region Health and Wellbeing – Mid-Year Review 2016

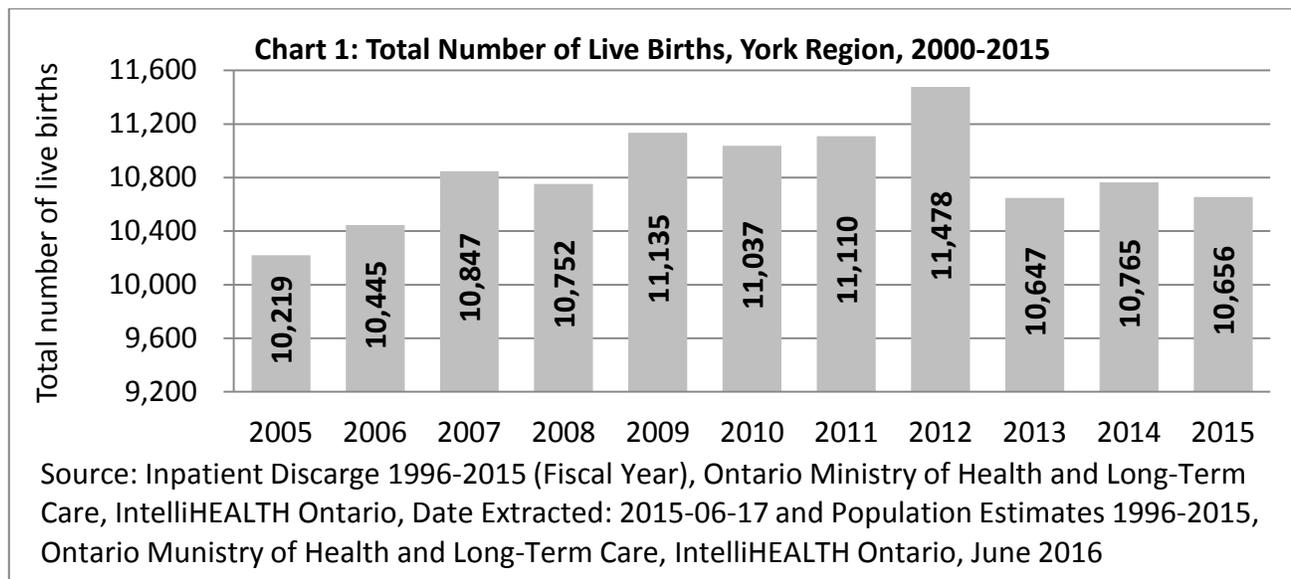
The Community and Health Services (CHS) Department provides programs and services for York Region residents to address their needs at every stage of life. This report summarizes key trends shaping CHS’ service delivery as they relate to the *York Region 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan: From Vision to Results*.

York Region’s population continued to grow through 2016

With a population of close to 1.2 million residents, York Region is the third-largest municipality in Ontario and the sixth-largest in Canada.

By July 2016, the total York Region population was estimated to be 1,175,690. This represents an increase of 9,370 residents and a growth rate of almost one per cent since December 2015. All York Region municipalities experienced growth between December 2015 and June 2016. Vaughan and Richmond Hill had the greatest increase in population of 2,516 and 2,065 residents respectively.

The growth of the Region’s population has two main components: immigration and babies born. Each year, 10,000 new immigrants (on average) settle in the Region and approximately 10,900 babies are born. Overall, there has been an upward trend in the number of births since 2005 (see Chart 1). After peaking in 2012 at 11,478 births, the number of births plateaued throughout 2013 and 2015, but remains higher compared to 2005.



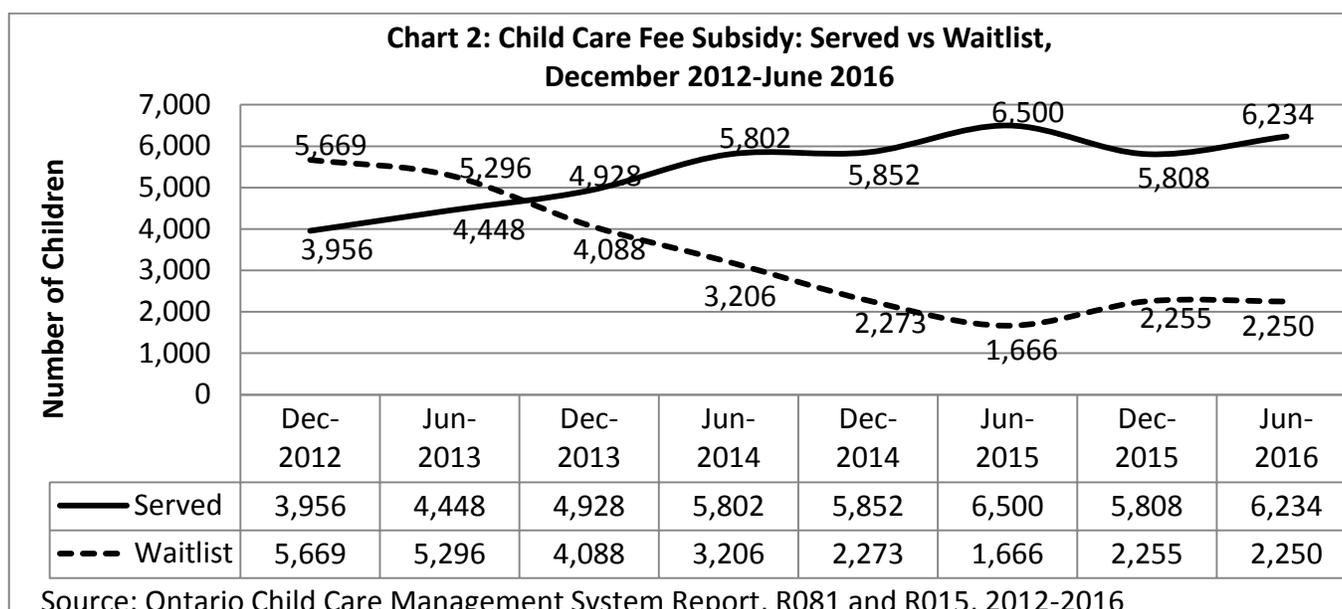
CHS programs and services support the development and retention of region-wide workforce

New provincial funding has helped decrease the waitlist for child care fee assistance allowing more low income residents to participate in the workforce

Working families often struggle to make ends meet and for many families, child care is out of reach because of the cost. Subsidized child care plays an important role in the ability of low and moderate income residents to participate in employment, training and developmental opportunities.

Since January 2013, new provincial funding has helped to decrease the waitlist for child care fee assistance by 60 per cent. Increased access to child care for low and moderate income families has resulted in York Region's lowest income families being able to pursue employment and/or education and move towards becoming economically independent. As of June 2016, over 88 per cent of these families were working or enrolled in education.

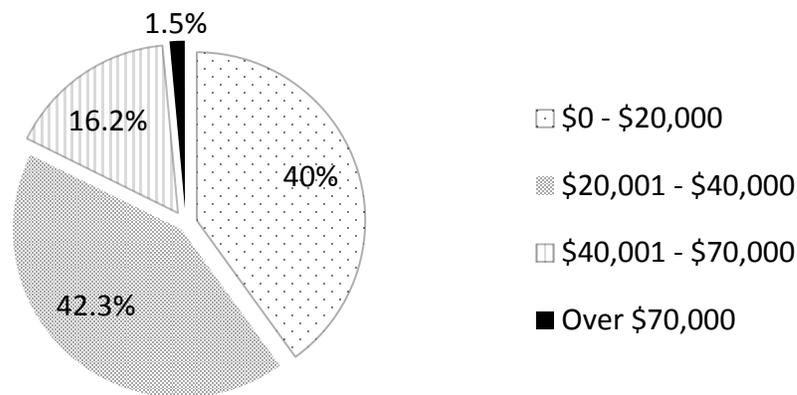
In June 2016, the monthly average number of children who received a child care fee subsidy was 6,234 and there were 2,250 children on the waitlist (see Chart 2). Although there has been a significant decrease in the child care fee assistance waitlist since 2012, as York Region's population growth and needs expand, the demand for child care fee assistance is expected to continue to grow. In June 2016, the waitlist for child care fee assistance increased by 584 children from June 2015.



The number of licensed spaces is driven primarily by increasing demand, demographics and changing socio-economic factors; as of December 2015, there were 538 licensed child care sites in York Region. The level of subsidy assistance is based on family income. In 2015, 40 per cent of families that received child care subsidy had an annual income of \$20,000 or less and another 42 per cent had an income between \$20,000 and \$40,000 per year (see Chart 3).



Chart 3: Income Distribution of Families on the Child Care Fee Assistance, June 2016



Source: Ontario Child Care Management System, R017

Early Intervention Services deliver programs to support children with special needs and their families

Early identification and intervention programs are offered free of charge to all families for children from birth to school entry or age 13 (when attending licensed child care) who have special needs or who are at risk due to developmental delays, disabilities, an established diagnosis or biological factors such as prematurity.

Over half (53 per cent) of the licensed child care sites in York Region (as of December 2015), have some level of support from Early Intervention Services and 89 per cent have a contractual agreement with the Region for fee subsidy.

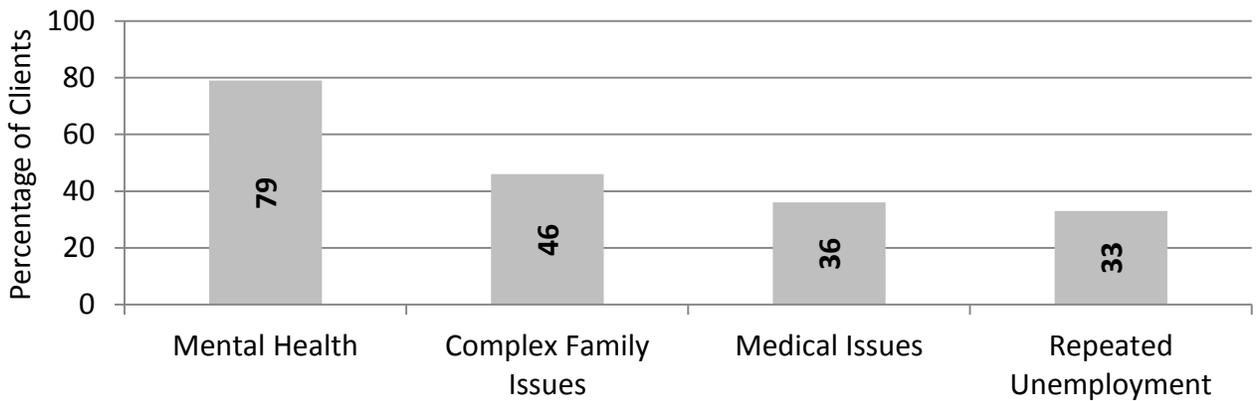
Council approval of strategies to support early diagnosis and intervention services has had a positive impact for families with children with special needs. As of June 2016, Early Intervention Services served 2,843 children with 196 children on the waitlist. These services help offer families an opportunity to continue working or return to the workforce.

The Integrated Support Program continues to support clients experiencing multiple barriers

The Integrated Support Program (ISP) is a specialized social work program that includes short-term counselling, case management, and community referrals offered to Social Services clients. The program helps clients remove life barriers so they can fully participate in programs like Employment and Financial Supports, Homelessness Community programs or Integrated Children Services and connect with community support programs and services. Addressing barriers to participating in programs improves clients' potential for broader participation in the workforce and community. From January to June 2016, ISP provided supports to 138 multi-barrier clients. Chart 4 provides a breakdown of the most common client needs between January and June 2016.



**Chart 4: Integrated Support Program Most Common Needs
Jan - Jun 2016**



Source: Social Services Branch, data accessed July 2016

The majority of referrals to ISP (83 per cent) were made by staff of the Ontario Works programs, followed by Early Intervention Services (9 per cent), Child Care Services (7 per cent) and other programs (1 per cent).

As of June 2016, there were 56 clients with multiple barriers on the waitlist for the ISP services. At the same time, the length of time clients wait from referral to active service was 8.2 weeks, decreased from 13.5 weeks on average in 2014. This is largely a result of adding a second social worker in early 2015.

Increasing the range of available and affordable housing choices continues to be a challenge

York Region is a robust, healthy and prosperous community but an expensive home ownership market with low vacancy rates means there is a need for support programs

Factors that have impacted home prices in York Region include a strong economy, population growth, low interest rates and the close proximity to the City of Toronto.

The year-to-date average resale price for 2016 home sales in York Region was \$922,610, more than \$150,000 or 20 per cent higher than the \$766,866 average in the first half of 2015, (Toronto Real Estate Board, June 2016). York Region's average prices saw the biggest price gains, by far, across the GTA in the first half of 2016.

While home ownership continues to grow, York Region's rental housing market is falling short in meeting the needs of people who often rent housing, such as younger residents, lower income families, seniors and people new to Canada. This is due to low vacancy rates, high rents, and few new rental units being built:

- The average apartment vacancy rate in York Region's purpose-built rental apartment market is the lowest in the GTA, at 1.5 per cent.



- The average monthly rent for a bachelor apartment in York Region is \$833, \$1,091 for a one-bedroom, \$1,262 for a two-bedroom and \$1,441 for a three-bedroom.
- There are more than 12,000 households on the region's waiting list for 7,000 subsidized housing units, with the average wait being 10 years.

Since housing is at the core of creating healthy communities, York Region has a number of programs to support it. For example, the Homelessness Prevention Program is dedicated to support those in need and ensuring continued home ownership and affordable housing choices. This program helps people who are at risk and behind on household payments and includes:

- Supports for preventing a utility cut off
- Preventing an eviction due to unpaid rent or mortgage payments
- Moving costs
- First and last month's rent
- ID replacement
- Urgent medical needs

Between January to June, 2016, the Homelessness Prevention program helped 109 households, issuing \$275,000 in financial assistance. This is consistent with 2015 which saw 236 households helped with a total of approximately \$560,000.

The Housing Services Branch is also working with residents and community partners to better address service gaps through a Community Health Framework. This initiative focuses on improving the physical and social environments of our social housing residents through more effective use of community resources and supports. For example, in 2015, Housing Services collaborated on:

- Thirteen tenant engagement activities, such as workshops and other outreach activities, implemented in partnerships with participation from more than 500 tenants.
- Four after-school programs implemented in housing communities in partnership with Social Services – two after-school programs funded through the Community Investment Fund.
- A 12-week Youth mentorship program in partnership with two social housing communities.

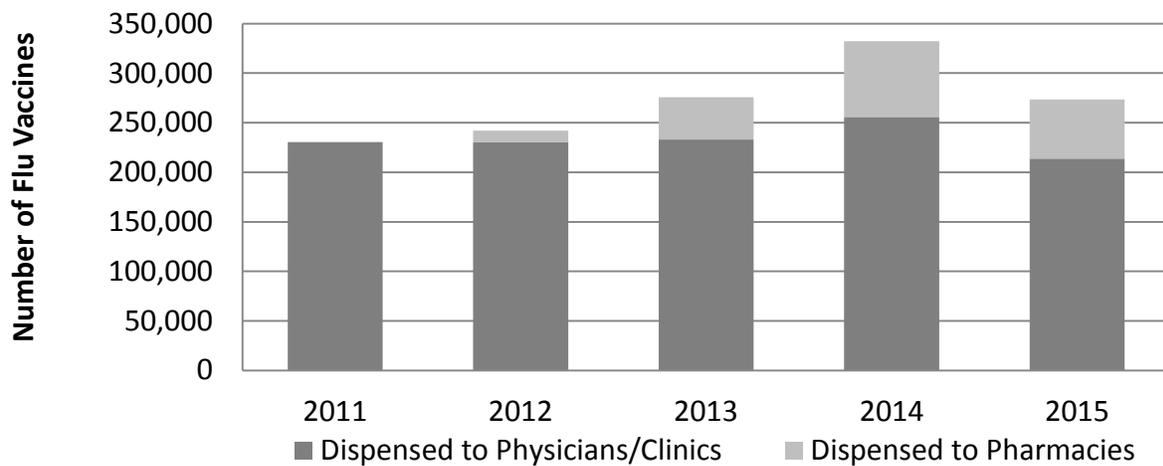
CHS continues to be a leader by providing a wide range of programs and services to protect public health

York Region Public Health's vaccine inventory program is responsible for the timely ordering and safe distribution of publicly funded vaccines

In 2012, Public Health's distribution of vaccines expanded after the provincial government increased the scope of services of pharmacists to include the administration of influenza immunizations (i.e., flu shots). Since then the number of pharmacies who have become official sites for administering flu shots has grown substantially from 44 pharmacies applying for and receiving approval in 2011 to 190 pharmacies in 2015, representing an increase of 332 per cent. The number of flu shots dispensed to pharmacies has also increased over this time from approximately 12,000 in 2012 to 76,000 doses in 2014, representing an increase of 520 per cent (Chart 5).



Chart 5: Total Number of Flu Vaccines Dispensed, Pharmacies and Physicians/Clinics, 2011 to 2015, York Region



Sources: The Regional Municipality of York, Biological Inventory System (BIOS), extracted by York Region Public Health as of July 28, 2016. The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Panorama Immunization database, extracted by York Region Public Health as of July 28, 2016

Note 1: Vaccines dispensed does not equal vaccines administered

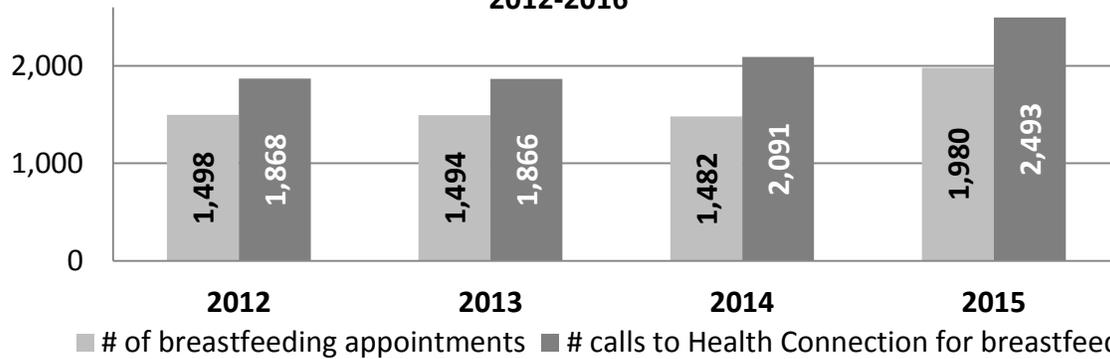
Note 2: The vaccine for the 2014/15 influenza season (administered in 2014), did not match the primary circulating strain. As such, this may explain some the decrease in flu vaccines dispensed in 2015.

There is an increasing demand for York Region Public Health parenting services

In 2015, York Region Public Health revised their approach to contacting new mothers. Previously, new mothers were contacted either by phone or postcard. Public Health Nurses now reach out to more mothers in person in the three York Region hospitals and by phone after hospital discharge. This has contributed to an increased awareness within the community regarding available services and in turn, the Breastfeeding program increased the number of appointments by 25 per cent in 2015 from 2014 to meet the increasing demand (Chart 6).



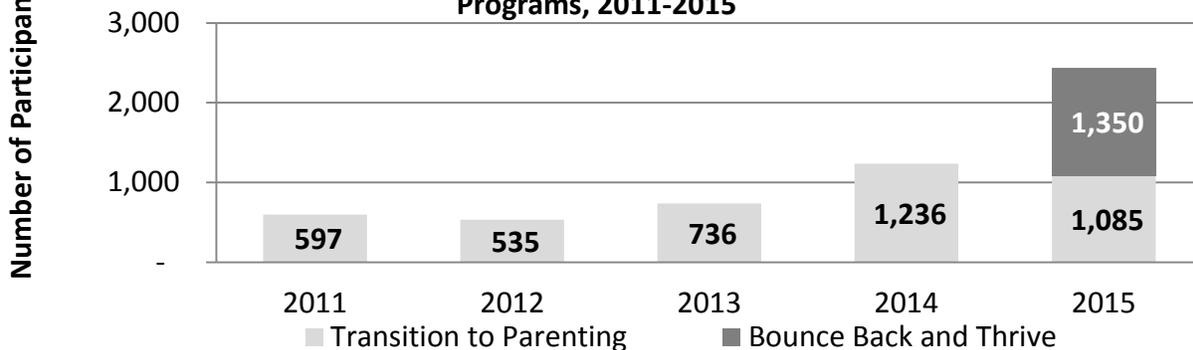
Chart 6: Increasing Demand for Breastfeeding Services in York Region, 2012-2016



Source: 2012-2014: Breastfeeding Program Interactions, Program Level Data; 2015: Baby Place and FACES databases and 2012-2014: Breastfeeding Program Interactions, Program Data

Public Health also offers the Transition to Parenting (TPP) and Bounce Back and Thrive (BBT) programs to support mental health and resiliency for parents, caregivers and children. Together, these two programs served 2,435 residents in 2015 and the demand continues to grow (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Transition to Parenting and Bounce Back and Thrive Programs, 2011-2015



Source: Family and Child Electronic System and Child Health Program database, accessed July 2016.

The TPP program is for new and expecting parents who may be experiencing depression/anxiety, or are looking for information and support while adjusting to parenthood. The program provides parents with information and support to help them cope and is offered in six locations throughout York Region, covering topics like building healthy relationships, tips for better communication, ways to improve self-esteem, etc.

The BBT program is a new initiative, implemented in 2015. This 10 week program teaches parents and caregivers to help themselves and their child “bounce back” from everyday stresses and hard times, relieve stress and calmly solve problems and conflicts. The BBT groups are co-facilitated in



partnership with community agencies and healthcare providers across York Region. Participants learn skills to help themselves and children feel less stressed and more hopeful about the future.

The Region's Long-Term Care and Seniors Community Programs are experiencing the impacts of Ontario's Aging At Home Strategy

With the announcement of Ontario's Aging at Home Strategy in 2007, the province signaled its intention to transition the long-term care sector. It subsequently increased annual funding for home care services to support healthy aging and independent living for people in their communities and set stricter admission criteria for long-term care so that only people with high or very high care needs would be eligible.

As a result of the enhanced eligibility criteria and longer wait times to access long-term care, residents in the Region's Homes are older, frailer, more likely to have dementia and complex care needs:

- The proportion of the Homes' 232 residents over the age of 80 increased to 77 per cent in 2015. In comparison, it was 54 per cent in 2005.
- Most residents have two or more chronic diseases; 69 per cent of residents take eight or more medications daily.
- Dementia is the most common diagnosis in both Homes. As of June 30, 2016, 55 per cent of Newmarket Health Centre residents and 67 per cent of Maple Health Centre residents had a diagnosis of dementia.
- A significant proportion of residents are worsening in their cognitive ability and behavioural symptoms. At the quarterly resident health assessments conducted from June 2013 to June 2016, an average of 14 per cent of residents had worsened cognitive ability and an average of 13 per cent had worsened behavioural symptoms.

With the limited availability of Long-Term Care beds, the Region's Adult Day Programs are helping people to remain in their homes

The Region provides the following Adult Day Programs to help York Region residents live in their homes for as long as possible and provide relief for caregivers during the day. As of June 30, 2016, there were 97 people on the waitlist for the Region's Adult Day programs. There are signs of growing ethnocultural diversity among the people on the waitlist that reflect the growth in immigration to York Region. While the majority of current program participants indicated English or Italian as their primary language, 16 per cent of people on the waitlist reported a different primary language (e.g., Romanian, Russian, Urdu, Mandarin and Arabic) which will have future impacts on service delivery for these programs.

New strategies will continue to make our communities more welcoming and inclusive

The York Region Seniors Strategy will define York Region's role in serving an aging population over the next 10-20 years



York Region's senior population is growing faster than any other age group. By 2031, 21 per cent of York Region's population will be aged 65 years of age or older. That is one in five residents. With growth happening across all age groups, the Seniors Strategy considers ways to accommodate an aging population within our growing communities so that everyone can thrive.

To provide direction in the development of the Strategy, a Seniors Strategy Advisory Task Force was established in June 2015, comprised of eight Regional Council members supported by CHS.

Over the past year, Task Force members have held a series of topic-focused meetings where they heard from internal and external experts. The Task Force also hosted community discussions with seniors and organizations that serve seniors, with participation from over 100 people. The Task Force finalized its recommendations in October 2016 and the strategy will be presented to Council for approval in November 2016.

CHS held "Let's Talk Inclusion" consultations across York Region on the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive workplace and community

Responses from the consultations will be used to inform the development of York Region's Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Charter. These dialogues addressed the many dimensions of diversity including age, sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual ability, religion, sexual orientation, educational background and expertise:

- Over 250 staff and residents participated in the internal and external consultations
- 377 people participated and shared their views about diversity and inclusion through Social Media (Twitter and Facebook)
- Over 1,800 visits were received to the web page during the campaign
- The hashtag #InclusiveYR generated 81 posts and almost 230,000 impressions

These sessions provided an opportunity for staff and residents to share their perspectives about diversity, and what York Region is doing well and what could be done differently to make the Region more welcoming and inclusive. The feedback received will be used to inform the development of a York Region Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Charter.

Strengthening the Region's network of human services to support people in achieving their potential

The Community Investment Strategy provides financial supports for community services targeted to low and moderate income residents

The funding provided under the Community Investment Strategy strengthens the capacity of the York Region human services system, promotes innovative and collaborative programs and enhances community-based services to address human services needs in York Region.

In 2016, Council approved 52 projects totaling \$5.5 million. These projects will provide low and moderate income residents with access to community supports that help stabilize their lives and help agencies strengthen their capacity to better serve residents.



The Region worked with community partners to support the arrival of Syrian Refugees

To support the federal government's commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees, York Region held a Refugee Sponsorship Information Fair earlier in 2016. The Region, with its Welcome Centre partners, hosted this event and approximately 250 residents and service providers attended. The Region also created www.YorkWelcome.ca/refugee, an online resource with an interactive map to provide information on supports and services for refugees and their sponsors.

As a direct result of the expected long-term impact of the refugee resettlement process, CHS also created the York Region Refugee Planning Table. The table included representation from community agencies, faith groups, school boards and York Region to help coordinate services, exchange information on refugee issues and identify areas of importance, such as transportation, childcare and employment, for strategic focus by the Region and community partners.

Conclusion

The *2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan* identifies areas requiring strategic focus and aligns with this term of Council. The Community and Health Services Department continues to play a pivotal role in the broader strategic success of the Region through the adoption of innovative approaches to service delivery including broader community engagement, outreach and partnerships. Examples include the Community Investment Strategy, Breastfeeding and Parenting programs and Housing Services partnerships. While successful, increasing service demands and client needs complexity continue to present challenges to overcome, such as the evolving increasingly complex client needs. However, broader corporate initiatives such as the development of the Seniors Strategy and a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy represent opportunities to address these evolving needs.

Community and Health Services will continue to monitor the trends influencing the Region and its residents and report back to Council in the spring of 2017.

