

## **Ottawa Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres<sup>i</sup>**

### **A Model for Service Collaboration and Integration**

#### **Executive Summary:**

Within the evolving health and social service network, there is an increasing focus on looking for ways to integrate services. These discussions have focused on a number of aspects of integration (integration through planning, integration of services through organizational mergers, integration of programs through matching/movement of programs from one organization to another, for example). The Ottawa Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (the Coalition) have a long history of working together, and through this experience have developed a strong model for service collaboration and integration. Given the current priorities of funders to look for ways to increase service efficiencies and to enhance service collaboration and integration, the Network has summarized the key features of this model. This model provides for another alternative to strengthen integration within the system of services.

#### **A Model for Service Collaboration and Integration**

The Ottawa Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres (CHRCs) has been working in partnership for over 20 years, providing a network of services that not only meet the needs of local communities but also meet City and in some cases regional needs. The CHRC Network (the Coalition) includes 14 CHRCs whose boundaries are inclusive of the City of Ottawa. We focus on residents who face barriers to accessing services. A full description of the network and services provided can be found on our web site link below.

The work of the CHRC Coalition is aligned with provincial and local strategic directions and policy frameworks: for example, the Champlain Local Health Integration Network, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the City of Ottawa, and United Way. The Coalition model includes focuses on enhanced service co-ordination, collaboration, integration and building community capacity. The value of this for clients is self evident: continuity of services and easier system navigation. The value for funders is no less clear: assured efficiencies in service and increased program effectiveness.

CHRCs work in a model that is built upon the principles of service co-ordination, collaboration, integration and community capacity building over its 20 year history. Through the Coalition a framework for has been developed that enhances the CHRCs ability to further these efforts. The Framework supports this both within each CHRC and the local community it serves as well as at the City and in some cases regional level.

In fact, each CHRC has a wide number of partnerships with other organizations, groups and associations within their specific catchment area that enrich the services offered within the community and integrate

opportunities for partner agency and community input, involvement and engagement in the work that is done.

At a Coalition level, a framework has evolved such that CHRCs can respond effectively to City wide and regional needs, as well as local catchment area priorities. The framework includes:

Service Collaboration: As broader and/or shared needs are identified, services are developed and organized to ensure we build upon the existing infrastructures within the Coalition and relevant partner agencies, and that services are accessible to the target client group(s). Examples of service collaboration include (among others):

- Harm Reduction Programs,
- the Good Food Box Program,
- the 'Growing Healthy' research initiative
- development of South Nepean Satellite CHC
- development of primary care services for francophones in the East end of Ottawa
- Settlement Services
- Services for New Canadian and multi-cultural residents
- Services focusing on people living in poverty
- Primary care services for non-insured

Service Co-ordination: Through our partnership, there are City wide needs identified that benefit from more focused co-ordination within the Coalition and with other relevant partners. In each example, CHRCs share a leadership role in the service model. Examples of Service Co-ordination include \*(among others):

- services developed for the Family Shelters to ensure we share expertise, build upon best practices, and co-ordinate efforts in securing funds;
- management of Community Support Services Shared Services funding which ensures co-ordination within the CSS network and broader communities;
- intensive multi-cultural case management services to reach out to the multi-cultural communities in partnership with CMHA;
- Assertive Community Treatment Teams which form a part of an ACTT network that ensures access to services across the City and the north Lanark Corridor;
- Ontario Early Years Centres where we participate in the co-ordination of services within the provincial riding boundaries the OEYCs serve as well as co-ordination within a network of OEYCs to enhance best practices;
- Lifestyle Enrichment for Senior Adults (LESA), an addiction and problem gambling program for older adults that is City wide;
- Addiction Assessment and Referral Services, providing services City wide;
- Outreach primary care services specific to Chinese and Vietnamese clients across the City;
- Lung Health Program

Service Integration: Within the Coalition there are also examples of services that are led by one CHRC but the services/staffing model is designed so that staff of the program are integrated into other CHRCs (and in some cases other partner agencies as well). This enables the service to reach out to a broad community, enhances access to clients, and enriches the service and host organization and enables

service planning to be done specific to the CHRC community needs. In each of the examples, CHRCs share in leading the model of service. Examples of service integration include (among others):

- Regional *Diabetes Education Program*
- *Violence Against Women Programming*
- Chiropractic Services
- *First Words* Speech and Language Program
- Early Intervention Blind Low Vision Program
- Infant Hearing Program
- Housing Loss Prevention Program
- Employment Programs (e.g. *Working Your Way to Success*, the *Practice Firm*)
- *Millennium Learning Centre Program*
- *Aging at Home*: Outreach Services to Frail, Low Income Seniors with Complex Needs
- *Aging at Home*: Integrated Falls Program

In addition to these three core elements of the CHRC Framework, the Coalition also works collaboratively on broader advocacy and community development initiatives across the City of Ottawa. Examples of these initiatives include (among others):

- Advocacy work related to poverty (e.g. *Rethinking Poverty* forum, *Anti-Poverty Project* Co-ordination)
- *No Community Left Behind*

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.coalitionottawa.ca>