



District of Sault Ste. Marie

Social Services Administration Board

- Ontario Works
- Child Care
- Social Housing
- Land Ambulance

ONTARIO WORKS COMMITTEE

**Draft Minutes for Meeting Held on
Thursday, April 29, 2004 at NOON
Plummer Board Room - Civic Centre**

Present: V. Burns

City Staff: C. Rosso

DSSMSSAB Staff: K. Streich Poser A. Nanne (notes)

Regrets: B. Hayes S. Butland
D. Overboe A. McRae

The Ontario Works Committee member present waited until 12:24 p.m. before declaring that the meeting did not meet quorum requirements.

1. Addictions Services Initiative

V. Burns, K. Streich-Poser and C. Rosso held a discussion about the Addictions Initiative Proposal and the fact that it will be brought forward to the DSSMSSAB Board. Those present commented that they would have like to see the Ontario Works Committee support and recommend the acceptance of the proposal to the DSSMSSAB Board but will now be unable to do so. V. Burns and C. Rosso held a discussion and review of Addictions Proposal. C. Rosso talked about the background and history of Addictions Initiative and updated V. Burns about the progress in implementation of this program.

Through the Addictions Initiative Proposal, Ontario Works is looking to process addiction clients using programs that are already in place, rather than hiring their own staff and offering services "in house". A local assessment provider will process clients, as the client caseworker remains the same. This service model is different than other Ontario Works models, however the Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Works feels that this is the best operational plan for us.

Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Works has already identified sixty (60) clients awaiting the implementation of this program. They will carefully observe the financial impact of the addictions program by monitoring the funding availability and actual expenses. The costs are unclear and Ontario Works personnel anticipate many possible positive outcomes.

The success of the Addictions Program can be measured in a number of ways. Personal improvement, increased employment options, harm reduction or

abstinence are all outcomes that indicate success. This is a healthy and helpful option for clients regardless of how success is measured.

Once the written approvals are received from MCSS and the DSSMSSAB Board a public forum will be held. C. Rosso does not foresee this happening before June 2004. This will help to unveil the program to the service providers as well as the public.

A glossary and hierarchy will be provided to the addiction service providers, to increase awareness. Caseworker and staff training has already taken place in preparation for the program launch. Sensitivity training will also be conducted. These costs are covered with the initial start up funds provided for the Addictions Program.

2. Other Business

The Ontario Works budget has not changed since 1999. The Executive Committee has approved the Ontario Works budget and it will be brought forward at the next DSSMSSAB Board meeting.

A discussion and update of other Ontario Works issues ensued. C. Rosso updated V. Burns in regards to the St. Vincent's Men's Shelter. The youth shelter will open on Monday. Pauline's Place was also discussed and this facility will accommodate 16 to 21 year-olds. Pauline's Place has up to 8 beds for both male and female clients. An Ontario Works youth worker will assist these clients.

The Algoma Steel job fair was held over the past few weeks and the procedure is still underway. The job fair was a great success.

The Ontario Works caseload stands at 2,337 and the levels have remained basically the same as they have in the past. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the clients are level one while thirty-seven percent (37%) are level two and ten percent (10%) are level three. Ontario Works is now starting to see an increase in calls from single parents and young students that were on OSAP during the school year. The call centres are making a real effort to hire summer students and help with potential clients needing financial help during the next few months.

Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Works will be launching some new in-house programs shortly. WHIMIS training will be available online at Ontario Works and at Station Towers as of this morning. A Budgeting Program will also be offered through Credit Counseling. This program should start very shortly and will qualify clients for level two funding.

It was suggested that the Ontario Works Committee tour the Job Connect office during a future meeting.

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.