

## Call for Proposals Community Outreach Worker Peer Program June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

### Background

The Toronto Central LHIN's first Integrated Health Service Plan (IHSP) 2007-2010 identified mental health and addictions (MHA) as a priority area. As part of this priority, the Toronto Central LHIN, supported by the Toronto Central LHIN MHA Gap Analysis Advisory Committee, set out to determine baseline MHA services and capacity within the LHIN. The resulting report, entitled "Identification of Service Gaps and Priorities in the Mental Health and Addictions Sector in the Toronto Central LHIN: A Starting Point" identified gaps, population needs and planning priorities across the LHIN.

In alignment with report findings, the Toronto Central LHIN increased its focus on the needs of people who are homeless and living with mental health and/or problematic substance use. In January 2010, an Advisory Committee was formed to guide the planning and implementation of the first think tank session on homelessness and mental health and problematic substance use. The Think Tank focused on the needs of this population at transition points between Emergency Departments (ED), shelters and crisis services. This call for proposals is based on one of the recommendations identified at the think tank session, and endorsed by the Advisory Committee and the TC LHIN's MHA Steering Committee.

The TC LHIN is committed to continued integration and coordination of MHA services resulting in more timely and equitable access and outcomes for those needing services. A number of new initiatives have been undertaken in the Toronto Central LHIN to better integrate services delivered in hospital and community settings for people with a mental illness or problematic substance use. Most of these have been built on existing successful programs and target the most marginalized sub-groups of frequent users of EDs and Withdrawal Management Services.

It is expected that the Community Outreach Worker pilot will be integrated/linked with such LHIN funded initiatives to enhance their impact and to help meet system needs. Based on a growing body of evaluation data and experiences, it is widely believed that a vital component effective client transition includes the provision of navigation support and accompaniment delivered by trained peers. It is also believed that peers working in isolation providing service directly in service settings may not result in the desired outcomes for the clients being served or the staff in those positions. Emerging promising practises suggest that peer teams be developed to allow for better training, support, utilization of resources and expertise in managing staff in designated peer roles. Early evidence shows that peer roles within MHA service delivery support reduction in hospitalization and ED repeat visits<sup>1,2</sup> in addition to being important elements of both national and provincial MHA frameworks. The intent of this call is to pilot this approach.

### Description

The Toronto Central LHIN is seeking proposals for a one-year pilot project that will employ trained community outreach peers to support better health outcomes for homeless individuals experiencing mental illness or

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<sup>1</sup> Linkins, K, Brya, J, Chandler, D. Frequent Users of Health Services Initiative: Final Evaluation Report. Prepared for: The California Endowment and the California Healthcare Foundation. 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Rivera JJ, Sullivan AM, Valenti SS. Adding consumer-providers to intensive case management: does it improve outcome? *Psychiatric Services* 2007; 58: 802\_809.

substance use problems. This peer-based outreach worker pilot project would be delivered through a lead agency, employing a team of community outreach workers whose key responsibilities would be to support system navigation, client accompaniment to appointments and other forms of peer support. The team would provide these services to specific partnering agencies, including the expanded Inner City Access Project (ICAP). The project will take place during fiscal 2010/11.

The objectives of the program:

1. To deliver effective service navigation support for targeted clients, in particular supporting transitions between hospital and shelters,
2. To provide meaningful employment to persons with lived experience in the continuum of care by providing positions that support health system service delivery
3. To develop promising practices regarding utilization of community outreach peer workers in the delivery of MHA services.

Suggested components of the community peer outreach worker model would include:

- Availability of a team of community outreach peers to partnering service agencies to provide health service navigation supports to targeted clients,
- Training, education, supervision and employment support
- Provision of 24 hour services, 7 days per week
- Support for partnering agencies to more effectively integrate services of community outreach peers
- Formal linkages between community outreach team and key LHIN funded initiatives targeting mental health and addictions population

## Who can Apply

All LHIN –funded agencies are eligible to apply for this funding. Priority will be given to those who demonstrate existing capacity/infrastructure that can be leveraged to support timely implementation of this initiative.

## Criteria for Selection

Please consult the [H-SIP Manual](#) on the Toronto Central LHIN website under Health Service Providers, and the [Health System Improvement Pre-Proposal](#).

Organizations applying for funding under this program must complete a [Health System Improvement Proposal \(H-SIP\)](#) and include a description of the population to be served, experience of the organization in serving this population, benefit to the community, collaboration with other organizations, budget and work plan for implementation.

In addition to the overarching Toronto Central LHIN criteria and considerations outlined in the H-SIP Manual, the following criteria and considerations will also be used to assess all submissions.

- Alignment with provincial and Toronto Central LHIN priorities.
- Ability to describe staffing model.
- Ability to leverage existing capacity and infrastructure to maximize project funds for direct service provision.
- Clearly articulated partnerships that provide an integrated response to support target population longer term.
- Organizational history of successful employment of people with lived experience of mental illness or problematic substance use (or appropriate partnership with such an organization).
- Demonstrated partnership experience within the addictions and mental health systems.

- Demonstrated experience with target population.
- Knowledge of successful system navigation model utilizing peer staff teams.
- Demonstrated experience of working within harm reduction framework.
- Ability to start service provision within 3 months of receiving funding.
- Ability to evaluate outcomes.

Proposals, please complete a [Health System Improvement Pre-Proposal \(H-SIP\)](#) found on the Toronto Central LHIN website. Please note that **All** sections of the [H-SIP Form](#) must be completed in order for the application to be considered. Proposals must be submitted to the [torontocentral@lhins.on.ca](mailto:torontocentral@lhins.on.ca) by **5pm on Tuesday, June 15, 2010**.

**Questions** from Health Service Providers regarding the 2010/11 Community Outreach Worker Peer Program Call for Proposals will be **accepted prior to Monday June 7<sup>th</sup>, at noon**. This process allows for all questions and answers to be posted on the Toronto Central LHIN website for all potential applicants to benefit from. Questions will not be accepted after June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. **Questions must be submitted in writing** to [torontocentral@lhins.on.ca](mailto:torontocentral@lhins.on.ca). Please include "Community Outreach Worker Question" in the subject line and provide contact information so that the LHIN team can get clarification on questions as needed. All questions and answers will be posted on the Toronto Central LHIN website the week of **June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010**.

## Timelines

Activity	Timeline
Call for Proposals Issued	Wednesday June 2, 2010
Submission of questions from HSPs	June 2 – June 7, 2010 by 12 noon
Questions and answers published on Toronto Central LHIN website	Week of June 7, 2010
Proposal submission deadline	Tuesday June 15, 2010 by 5 p.m.
Successful applicants recommended to Senior Team and Board	Week of June 21, 2010
Ministry acknowledgement	July 2010 (estimate)
Program Implementation	July - August 2010