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■ CANNABIS AND YOU

# HALTON GETS FUNDS FOR CANNABIS-RELATED POLICING, HEALTH COSTS

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Halton has received almost half a million dollars from the province to offset costs incurred by police and health officials since recreational cannabis was legalized last year.

Regional council approved the disbursement of the funds at its recent meeting, with the majority - \$330,573 - going to Halton regional police, and \$136,391 being allocated to the Halton Region Health Department.

The money comes from a provincial fund that was set up to assist with the implementation costs of cannabis legalization.

According to a staff report from Medical Officer of Health Dr. Hamidah Meghani, the majority of the funding will be used to offset increased enforcement and paramedic costs, followed by the flux in public inquiries.

"For paramedics, we have seen a rise in calls related to cannabis use or misuse," she told council. "Overall it's related to cannabis use that leads to things like impairment, or other health effects that re-



Torstar file photo illustration

A Region survey found that 46 per cent of Halton adults reported using cannabis in their lifetime.

quire emergency care."

Preliminary results from a survey being conducted by the region reveal that 46 per cent of Halton adults reported using cannabis in their lifetime, while 19 per cent said they used the substance in the past year.

"About 10 per cent of adults who had never used cannabis before, or who had not used it in the year prior to legalization, reported that they had tried cannabis or intended to try it following legalization," notes Meghani's report.

Full results from the survey are expected by summer 2020.

Public health staff are now exploring options to update a regional bylaw - which prohibits smoking within nine metres of municipal buildings entrances - to include the smoking of cannabis and use of e-cigarettes and water pipes. A draft bylaw will be brought back to regional council early next year.

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