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NEWS



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The Region is exploring different ways to shelter the homeless during the pandemic.

REGION LOOKS TO CREATE PANDEMIC-SAFE HOMELESS SHELTERS

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Halton is considering the potential purchase of properties that could serve as emergency shelters to help the homeless during the pandemic.

The regional municipality is continuing to use hotel rooms to house vulnerable residents in a socially-distanced manner, with 74 people currently being sheltered in this fashion, said a memo to council from Halton Commissioner of Social and Community Services Alex Sarchuk.

"The Region's dependency on hotels is expected to continue for a prolonged period," he said.

"Regional staff is investigating potential capital acquisition of sites that can be repurposed as emergency shelters and supportive housing that would effectively allow for appropriate infection control practices, notably physical distancing and isolation, to be

maintained."

He noted this plan may prove to be the "more cost-effective, long-term approach."

Halton staff has submitted a business case to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the potential property acquisitions, which are eligible to be covered by over \$2.4 million in provincial funding.

Earlier this year, Halton was forced to reduce the capacity at the Salvation Army Lighthouse Shelter in Oakville and Bethany Residence supportive housing property in Burlington in the name of social distancing and infection control.

Hotel rooms have been used since mid-March to help those who need emergency shelter, with expenses being offset by one-time funding Halton received from the provincial and federal governments.

In total, 95 individuals are currently in shelter environments supported by the Region, said Halton CAO Jane MacCaskill in an

update to council.

"Our most vulnerable populations have been significantly impacted by the pandemic," she said. "We are planning for the potential of further increased demands in the program if there's a second wave this fall."

In addition to covering hotel costs, the Region has used the funds from the upper levels of government to support more than 16 community agencies working with vulnerable residents throughout Halton — organizations that Sarchuk says have seen a "significant increase" in requests for emergency food, personal protective equipment and transportation.

For example, Halton has funded Food for Life to deliver food and essential goods to vulnerable residents who are self-isolating or unable to access food, including those being sheltered in hotels.

MacCaskill reported that since March, the organization has made more than 6,000 such deliveries to over 1,500 residents throughout the region — a measure that she said could also be scaled up, should there be a second wave of COVID-19.

For more information on Halton's emergency shelter and homelessness prevention programs visit halton.ca.

legal matters | LITIGATION

ASK THE PROFESSIONAL

Q

How do you determine spousal support?

A

We typically look at the Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines, commonly referred to as "SSAG's", in order to determine spousal support entitlement and obligations. We have a program that "runs the numbers" for us. We input certain fundamental data, including the ages of the parties, the length of the marriage or relationship, any children and the residency arrangements for the children, and of course the parties' respective incomes. The program will then tell us what if any spousal support is payable in accordance with the SSAG's, including for how long that support is likely payable (subject to a change in circumstances). The SSAG's will provide a range of the amount of support payable, being a "low", "mid" and "high" range. The duration is also usually a range, for instance 5 – 9 years. A principled analysis is used to determine the appropriate amount of spousal support, but it seems that the majority of cases fall into the mid-range of the SSAG's unless you can show why it should fall to the "low" or "high" range. Notably, spousal support is determined after the child support obligations. Also, spousal support is taxable in the hands of the recipient, while tax deductible by the payor – there are no tax implications with child support payments. We do a lot of family law. We have the experience to help you understand what you may be entitled to receive, or what you may have to pay for spousal support. We have three offices, including 8 Guelph Street, Georgetown, in the Lounsbury Life & Group Insurance Benefits building. Given the unfortunate ongoing public health situation, we are happy to have a free consultation about your matter by Zoom or over the telephone. Have a great safe weekend.

Todd C. Hein

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