

**The Regional Municipality of Durham**

**MINUTES**

**HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, February 6, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Health & Social Services Committee was held on Thursday, February 6, 2025 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 9:30 AM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Councillor Roy, Chair  
Councillor Dies, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Anderson  
Councillor Brenner\*  
Councillor Carter\*  
Councillor Jubb\* attended the meeting at 9:31 AM  
Councillor Neal\* attended the meeting at 9:55 AM  
Regional Chair Henry  
**\* denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Also  
Present: Councillor Foster\*  
Councillor Garrod\*  
Councillor McDougall\* attended for part of the meeting  
Councillor Woo\* attended for part of the meeting  
Councillor Wotten\*  
**\* denotes Councillors participating electronically**

Staff  
Present: E. Baxter-Trahair\*, Chief Administrative Officer  
C. Boyd, Solicitor, Chief Administrative Office – Legal Services  
S. Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner of Social Services  
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services  
A. Di Pietro, Director, Health Protection, Health  
J. Dixon, Director, Business Affairs and Financial Management, Social Services  
L. Fleury, Deputy Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services  
J. Gaskin, Director, Children's Services, Social Services  
R. Hirstwood-Judd, Supervisor, Family Services, Social Services  
B. Holmes, Deputy General Manager, Durham Region Transit  
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
R.J. Kyle\*, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health  
L. MacDermaid, Director, Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors, Social Services

L. McIntosh, Director, Income & Employment Support, Social Services  
P. McTavish, Associate Medical Officer of Health  
G. Muller, Director, Affordable Housing Development & Renewal  
J. Svanda\*, Acting Deputy Chief, Region of Durham Paramedic Services, Health  
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services  
K. Thangaraj\*, Director, Population Health and Chief Nursing Officer, Health  
T. Tyner Cavanagh, Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships  
E. Valant, Director, Housing Services  
T. Zupancic, Climate Change and Health Specialist, Health Protection, Health

**\* denotes staff participating electronically**

**2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

**3. Election of Health and Social Services Committee Vice-Chair**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Health and Social Services Committee.

Moved by Councillor Anderson, Seconded by Regional Chair Henry,

- (1) That Councillor Dies be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Health and Social Services Committee.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,

- (2) That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

The Chair asked if Councillor Dies wished to stand. Councillor Dies indicated she would stand.

Councillor Dies was acclaimed as the Vice-Chair of the Health and Social Services Committee.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,

- (3) That the minutes of the regular Health & Social Services Committee meeting held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, be adopted.

CARRIED

**5. Statutory Public Meetings**

There were no statutory public meetings.

## **6. Presentations**

### **6.1 Alex Swirski, Epidemiologist, and Tara Zupancic, Climate Change and Health Specialist, re: Climate Change and Health in Durham Region – Assessing the Impacts of Solar Ultraviolet Radiation**

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Tara Zupancic, Climate Change and Health Specialist, appearing virtually, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to Climate Change and Health in Durham Region – Assessing the Impacts of Solar Ultraviolet Radiation.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Presentation Overview
- Why assess climate and health vulnerability?
- Report Series: 2024-2025
- What are the report objectives?
- What is solar UVR vulnerability?
- Overview of solar UVR exposure in Durham Region
- Where are risks of exposure higher?
- Climate change and local solar UVR exposure
- What are the health impacts of solar UVR?
- Solar UVR Protections
- What actions can support sun-protection?
- What are our strengths and resources?
- Next Steps
- Key Messages

T. Zupancic responded to questions with regards to education being provided within the community to new parents on sun protection for their children.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,  
(4) That Alex Swirski, Epidemiologist, and Tara Zupancic, Climate Change and Health Specialist, be invited to present at a future Committee of the Whole meeting with regards to Climate Change and Health in Durham Region – Assessing the Impacts of Solar Ultraviolet Radiation.

CARRIED

## **7. Delegations**

### **7.1 Ben Earle, Chief Executive Officer, Feed the Need in Durham, re: Update on Food Insecurity and Response in Durham**

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Ben Earle, Chief Executive Officer, Feed the Need in Durham, appeared before Committee in-person with regards to Community Food Security Update.

B. Earle advised that Feed the Need in Durham was established in 2008 as the regional food distribution hub to gather large quantities of food, helping local food banks to nourish communities. Feed the Need in Durham works with 70 food

programs and 55 organizations and has distributed \$8.8 million worth, which is 2.5 million pounds of fresh and non-perishable food annually.

B. Earle stated there is an escalating crisis of food insecurity and has increased the growing demand for community food programs. From 2022 to 2023, the number of households that are food insecure has increased by 10.9%, with food prices increasing by 22.5% from January 2020 to January 2024 and housing prices increasing by 21.9%. In 2023, 37,887 visited a food bank in Durham Region which is an increase of 60% since 2021.

B. Earle stated that food banks are not the answer to food insecurity and the focus needs to be on policy change and working on income insecurity. Feed the Need in Durham has started their first round of production in a 3,000 sq. ft. vertical farming facility to provide fresh produce to those in need.

B. Earle responded to questions from the Committee.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Anderson,

- (5) That Ben Earle, Chief Executive Officer, Feed the Need in Durham, be invited to present at the March 19, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting with regards to a Community Food Security Update.

CARRIED

## 7.2 Patricia Conlin, re: Foundations for Healthier Communities

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Patricia Conlin appeared before Committee in person with regards to Foundations for Healthier Communities.

P. Conlin expressed concerns with focusing on the health of communities and the shifts in public health that need attention by Council and the community. All over the world a message of urgently needed health reform is being echoed to tackle the growing chronic disease epidemic and corruption within public health agencies. She is reaching out to Regional Council as a partner to look at the root causes of this crisis and take steps to address them.

P. Conlin also expressed concerns with the fluoridation policies in Durham Region as what was accepted in the past is now understood through new science to not be good for human health. She stated that many nations and regions are taking steps to remove toxic chemicals from public water to improve public health.

P. Conlin also stated that she has heard concerns from farmers in the community regarding sewage sludge (biosolids) being put on farmlands. She stated biosolids being created from anaerobic digestion plants are misleading and are being sold as ecofriendly fertilizer to farmers. She stated that biosolids should not be spread on fields where edible food is grown.

P. Conlin also expressed concerns with respect to the use of toxic chemicals such as RoundUp and some sunscreen products and stated they can be harmful to human health and other methods should be considered.

P. Conlin raised concerns with respect to Durham Region's policy regarding net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as she feels it is unachievable. She stated the Region should consider implementing alternative health policies and views even if they may be disagreed with.

P. Conlin stated she would like to see the following actions taken to address current health policies:

- Investigate fluoridation in Durham Region
- Withdraw covid vaccines from pharmacies and drug stores
- Reducing materials that go into green bins
- Study incineration for future use
- Prohibit residential use of RoundUp and other toxic herbicides
- Withdraw from partners for climate protection, ICLEI, local governments for sustainability, and Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
- Focus on physical food and health by supporting local farmers and educate the public on growing their own food
- Promote safe remedies during flu season and provide Vitamin D at little cost in elderly care homes.

## **8. Health**

### **8.1 Correspondence**

There were no communications to consider.

### **8.2 Reports**

There were no Health reports to consider.

## **9. Social Services**

### **9.1 Correspondence**

There were no communications to consider.

### **9.2 Reports**

There were no Social Services reports to consider.

## **10. Advisory Committee Resolutions**

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

## **11. Confidential Matters**

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

**12. Other Business**

**12.1 Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs**

Councillor Carter raised questions to staff with respect to the announcement of a Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub being allocated to Durham Region; the potential location of the HART Hub; Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) being awarded as the lead agency for the HART Hub who will be leading the planning and development of the project; which community the HART Hub has been allocated to; the launch date for the HART Hub in Durham Region; DCHC managing the deliverables of the HART Hub including the responsibility of the day-to-day operations; and services being provided within the HART Hub.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled Health & Social Services Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

**14. Adjournment**

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Councillor Dies,  
(6) That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 AM

Respectfully submitted,

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E. Roy, Chair

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K. Smith, Committee Clerk