FROM HOSTELS TO HOMES:

Ontario's Experience with the Housing First Approach

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OUTLINE

- "Housing First" Approach
- Overview of the Hostels to Homes (H2H) Pilot Initiative
- Funding Parameters
- Policy Parameters
- Service Delivery Trends
- Service Delivery Models
- Evaluation
- Preliminary Data

"HOUSING FIRST"

- Emphasis on helping homeless people quickly access and then sustain housing

- Premised on research findings that homeless people are more responsive to intervention and social service supports after they are in their own housing

- 3 key components:
  - crisis intervention and needs assessment
  - re-housing to more permanent accommodation
  - "wrap-around" supports based on individualized case management

OVERVIEW OF H2H

- <u>Purpose:</u> to assist chronic hostel users in attaining safe, appropriate, affordable and stable accommodation

- <u>Expected Outcomes:</u>
  - return the use of emergency hostel services to its original intent – short term and infrequent use
  - enhance coordination and integration of housing and other support services
  - produce long-term savings for the province and municipalities

OVERVIEW OF H2H, cont'd

- <u>Implementation:</u>
  - Phase I began January 2007, Phase II began January 2008
  - six municipal pilot sites: Hamilton, Kingston, London, Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor
  - duration of up to 18 months from the date a participant enters the pilot initiative
  - expected final end date: June 2010

FUNDING PARAMETERS

- The cost of H2H = the cost of keeping an individual in a hostel for the same duration

    H2H supports through Ontario Works Health-Related Discretion Benefits (HRDB)

    =

    emergency hostel per diem

    −

    Ontario Works financial assistance for basic needs and shelter

- Approximately $800 available for a single participant, based on current rates

- One-time funding for start-up costs

POLICY PARAMETERS

- Target: chronic hostel users (30+ days in hostels in a year), eligible for Ontario Works assistance

- Involvement of community partners in pilot development

- 18 months of support with phase-out of services beginning in the 12th month

- Linkages with local community and existing services

- In addition, monthly reporting to the ministry and participation in an Implementation Committee

POLICY PARAMETERS, cont'd

- Flexibility to meet the unique characteristics and needs of the local community, including:
    - the number and demographic of participants
    - the service delivery model

SERVICE DELIVERY TRENDS

- <u>Targeted Participant Demographics:</u>
  - majority – single adult male, "hard-to-serve"
  - families
  - youth
  - single women

SERVICE DELIVERY TRENDS, cont'd

- <u>Service Path:</u> through an individualized case management approach
    - recruitment/assessment
    - housing placement and stabilization (e.g., landlord relations, rent/utilities pay direct, eviction prevention, housing allowance, rent geared to income, etc.)
    - other "wrap-around" supports provision (e.g., health, addictions services, life skills training, informal counselling, employment supports, etc.)

SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

- All pilot sites involve collaboration with hostels and other community service providers

- However, the level of integration for service delivery varied among sites resulting in two major models:
  - purchase of service agreements
  - direct delivery
    - recruitment/assessment and housing stabilization by municipal staff working with seconded staff from service providers including hostels; other supports provided by community agencies
    - all stages of the service path by an integrated case management team comprised of dedicated municipal staff, seconded staff from hostels and other community agencies

EVALUATION

- Two components: process and outcomes involving interviews with ministry staff, municipalities, partner agencies and participants

- Outcomes evaluation includes a cost-analysis and economic evaluation, relating cost with outcomes

- Expected to be completed by Summer 2010

PRELIMINARY DATA

- Based on data pilot sites provided to the ministry, as of January 31, 2009, a total of 947 hostel residents had been housed

- 48% (459) had finished participating in the pilot

- Of those who had finished with the pilot, the vast majority (72% or 328) were housed when they left the pilot, and 14% (63) left due to finding employment

PRELIMINARY DATA, cont'd

- Reported successes:
  - stabilized housing situation
  - enhanced self-confidence
  - simpler system to navigate
  - increased knowledge of available resources
  - better attachment to the community
  - supportive relationships with service staff

PRELIMINARY DATA, cont'd

- Reported challenges:
  - The per diem funding model for hostels – based on bed occupancy rates – is inconsistent with the objectives of H2H which emphasizes transitioning hostel users into permanent housing
  - Definition of the target group (chronic hostel users) is too broad, resulting in the selection of participants who may not be suitable for the limited period of supports under H2H
  - A large proportion of participants require intensive pre-housing supports that require more resources
  - Shortage of assistance to make housing affordable

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Questions