



CMHA STREET TEAM

THE CHALLENGE

COVID-19 has brought Hamilton's housing and opioid crises further to light. More than ever, the voices of individuals living with addictions and mental health issues unable to afford housing are clearly articulated in the media. Despite best efforts to find housing before the winter set in, there are still at least 100 individuals with high-acuity needs living in tents spread across the city. Reducing barriers to accessing equitable mental and physical health supports tailored to the unique needs of those living in encampments is critical to enabling them to secure and maintain housing. This need is identified by housing, health and social service providers, and by those with lived experience alike.

THE SOLUTION

- CMHA Hamilton created, from already stretched resources, the CMHA Street Team. This is an extension of our Primary Health Care Clinic, which provides accessible primary, mental health and addictions care to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Initiated in July 2020, one registered nurse and four peer support workers visit encampments across the city.
- They provide mental health and addictions support, nursing care, and connect individuals living in tents virtually to physicians, addictions medicine specialists and psychiatrists to treat and stabilize their health.
- In addition, the team facilitates access to housing, supports transitions into housing and ensures continued support to prevent eviction and institutionalization. This is a win for both the individual in need and the housing provider.
- Working with community partners to meet the needs of the people in the community, more information can be provided by contacting 905-521-0900 ext. 247.

WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

- People experiencing homelessness, 16 years of age or older who are without a family doctor in Hamilton
- People experiencing mental health and addictions issues
- People who have experienced mistrust with the health care system and could benefit from flexible intensive supports
- People interested in meeting with a peer support worker to provide hope in their recovery