



Executive Director's Report

Annual General Meeting 2023 / 2024:

September 26, 2024

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Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that Hamilton is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wyandot, Haudenosaunee and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations. The territory mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibway and other allied nations that peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. This land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, this is the home to many Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in this community, on their territory.

We recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land. I invite you to take a moment of reflection to acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and to consider how we can, individually and collectively, move forward in support of reconciliation, justice and respectful collaboration.

Message from the Executive Director

Contact Hamilton is supported by dedicated and caring employees, and a volunteer Board of Directors. Contact Hamilton employees and Board volunteers are guided by our service values and principles:

- **Integrity** – Contact Hamilton board, staff and volunteers will be trustworthy, honest, responsible, and will treat people with dignity and respect
- **Diversity** – Contact Hamilton board, staff and volunteers will be inclusive, fair, equitable, welcoming and provide a safe place to request and receive service
- **Empathy** – Contact Hamilton board, staff and volunteers will act with compassion, patience, and will provide support and guidance
- **Accountability** – Contact Hamilton board, staff and volunteers will be transparent, responsive, and strive for excellence

Contact Hamilton works in close partnership with local, regional and provincial service provider organizations and networks in support of children, youth, adults with developmental disabilities, their families and support networks. We are honoured to do this important work.

I am pleased to present my Executive Director's Annual General Meeting Report for the fiscal year 2023 - 2024. This report is a summary of key accomplishments in 2023 – 2024, and focus areas for 2024 – 2025:

- **Children and Youth Services**
- **Developmental Services Ontario Hamilton-Niagara Region**
- **Passport Hamilton-Niagara Region**

With appreciation,

Lea Pollard, Executive Director

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Key Organizational Activities in 2023 – 2024

- Continued implementation of Contact Hamilton’s **EDI foundational priorities**:
 - Increasing staff comfort and skill to support discussions related to cultural considerations and why this is important information.
 - Normalizing discussions and conversations about EDI, and creating safety for the discussion to occur.
 - Recognizing and accepting that awareness can bring discomfort which is necessary in creating opportunities for change.
 - Recognition that EDI development is a lifelong process and journey and that it will not be easy at times.
- Protected time for **team-specific learning activities in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**, and Contact Hamilton’s ongoing commitment to do and learn more about Indigenous history
- Ongoing **mandatory EDI training** for all employees in the areas of: Indigenous Cultural Capacity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppressive Practice, Positive Space, and Applied Suicide Intervention
- **SANYAS Indigenous Cultural Capacity training** to employees and Board
- Ongoing **review and revision of key employment and human-resource policies** to reflect EDI principles
- Inclusion of statements **on all employment postings** promoting the importance of EDI

Key Goals for 2024 – 2025:

- Continued implementation of **Contact Hamilton’s EDI foundational priorities**, with report-back mechanisms to measure progress
- Continued implementation of **Contact Hamilton’s EDI Committee** as a mechanism to promote the principles and values of EDI, and the ongoing development of EDI goals and priorities over time
- Ongoing review and revision of Contact Hamilton’s **employment and human-resource policies and practices** to ensure EDI principles are reflected
- Ongoing review and revision of Contact Hamilton’s policies relating to **accessibility, consumer rights, service values and principles, and disability** to ensure EDI principles are reflected
- Creation of a **Code of Conduct policy for Employees, and a Code of Conduct policy for Consumers and Stakeholders**, to promote amongst other things, respectful and dignified treatment
- Creation of an **EDI Statement for Consumers and Stakeholders**, to be posted on Contact Hamilton’s website
- **Expand SANYAS training** to more staff and Board members
- **Development of monthly bulletins** to Contact Hamilton staff to build awareness and promote interest in various observances, holidays, and cultures

- Focus on developing internal and public-facing materials that are written using **clear language principles** to enhance accessibility and understanding

French Language Services (FLS)

Key activities in 2023 - 2024:

- Ongoing **assessment of Contact Hamilton's ability to address expectations** related to French Language Services
- Continued **translation of public-facing documents** in French
- Revision of Contact Hamilton's **FLS policy** and supporting procedures
- Inclusion of a statement in all **employment postings promoting French language** abilities, and the translation of all employment postings in French.

Key Goals for 2024 - 2025:

- Continued development and implementation of Contact Hamilton's FLS work plan to **increase Contact Hamilton's FLS capacity where able**
- Explore **advertising employment opportunities in French media** where able

Information Technology (IT) Security

Key activities in 2023 - 2024:

- Ongoing implementation of recommendations arising from 2 third-party IT audits conducted in 2020 - 2021 and 2023 – 2024 in order to continue to enhance the **security of Contact Hamilton's IT infrastructure**
- **Cyber-security training** for all employees

Key Goals for 2024 - 2025:

- Continued **monitoring of Contact Hamilton's IT status**
- Ongoing **staff training and assessment** regarding cyber-security threats

Children and Youth Services Program

Key activities in 2023 - 2024:

- Provision of the following core services:
 - **Access and Service Coordination**
 - Access to child / youth mental health services (to December 31, 2023)
 - Access to child / youth developmental, autism, FASD and complex needs services
 - **Coordinated Service Planning**
 - **FASD Consultation Service**

- **Complex Needs Placement Coordination Service (CNPC)**
- **Facilitation and leadership to critical community processes**
 - Case Resolution / Complex Special Needs
 - Transitional Aged Youth
 - Residential Placement Advisory Committee
 - Violence - Threat Risk Assessment or VTRA (to December 31, 2023)
- Continued **expedited response to children / youth in highly urgent need of mental health services**, inclusive of urgent consultation protocols with various service provider partners (to December 31, 2023)
- **Initial response to all incoming referrals within 1-5 days** in order to: reassure people that their referrals were received; share approximate time for response; and to share services that can be used immediately during the waiting period (to December 31, 2023)
- Continued **participation on various Child and Youth Mental Health Lead Agency initiatives** (to December 31, 2023)
- Continued coordination, support, and management of the **Hamilton FASD Collaborative** including management of social media presence, and leadership with respect to the development of FASD resources and events
- Continued **quality assurance activities** including outreach to consumers about their service experience
- Continued active participation and leadership on relevant **local, regional and provincial tables**

- **Planning with Hamilton Health Sciences** regarding the fiscal expansion of Contact Hamilton's Coordinated Service Planning program in 2024 - 2025 to support earlier intervention for children and youth waiting for coordinated service planning
- **Closure of Contact Hamilton's child / youth mental health access program** and transition of this function to Lynwood Charlton Centre by December 31, 2023
- **Review and restructure of the Children and Youth Services Team as a whole**, focusing on reorganization and ensuring integration of all Contact Hamilton child / youth programs following the closure of the child / youth mental health access program

Stats for 2023 - 2024:

ACCESS AND SERVICE COORDINATION

- ✓ The **Children and Youth Services Program** had 20,924 contacts on behalf of 2,730 unique children and youth:
 - ✓ 2,470 children and youth presenting with mental health needs
 - ✓ 193 children and youth presenting with developmental disabilities
 - ✓ 67 children and youth presenting with mental health and developmental needs
- ✓ 7,004 children and youth were open to the **Access and Service Coordination Program**
 - ✓ 6,356 children and youth presenting with mental health needs
 - ✓ 421 children and youth presenting with developmental needs
 - ✓ 227 children and youth presenting with mental health and developmental needs
- ✓ The **Access and Service Coordination Program** made the following referrals:

- ✓ 1,124 referrals to Ministry funded child and youth mental health programs, on behalf of 1,013 children and youth
- ✓ 202 referrals to Ministry funded child and youth developmental programs, on behalf of 150 children and youth

COORDINATED SERVICE PLANNING

- ✓ 61 new referrals to the Coordinated Service Planning Program
- ✓ 14 new children and youth began to receive coordinated service planning
- ✓ 35 children and youth were waiting for the Coordinated Service Planning program at March 31, 2024
- ✓ 61 children and youth had an active coordinated service plan

FASD CONSULTATION SERVICE

- ✓ 21 new referrals to Contact Hamilton's FASD Consultation service
- ✓ 61 unique children / youth served; 71 FASD services provided (some children received multiple services throughout the year)
- ✓ 13 children and youth were waiting for Contact Hamilton's FASD Consultation service at March 31, 2024
- ✓ Support to the Hamilton FASD Collaborative – coordination of
 - ✓ 6 case conferences for children / youth
 - ✓ 12 in-service sessions to agencies

- ✓ International FASD Awareness Day event at Gage Park on September 9, 2023
- ✓ Intensive FASD training provided to 7 new community members

Key Goals for 2024 - 2025:

- Implementation of Contact Hamilton's **new Access and Service Coordination program** for children and youth presenting with developmental, FASD, autism, and / or complex needs
- Implementation of the **fiscal expansion of the Coordinated Service Planning program** (funded by Hamilton Health Sciences Extensive Needs Service)
- Contribute to and implement **upcoming changes to the provincial Complex Special Needs program**
- **Internal review of Contact Hamilton's FASD, Coordinated Service Planning and CNPC programs** to ensure alignment across programs, and streamline processes
- **Expanding collaboration with service provider partners** including renewed focus on developing a children's respite committee
- **Enhance quality assurance activities** including outreach to consumers about their service experience by creating consumer experience surveys for the FASD and Coordinated Service Planning programs
- Continued participation in and leadership at **local, regional, and provincial tables**

Developmental Services Ontario Hamilton Niagara Region (DSO HNR)

Key activities in 2023 - 2024:

- **Provision of the following core services:** provincially consistent eligibility confirmation process; provincially consistent provincial application process (including reapplication when required); service navigation including application updates, referrals and registrations; coordination of local / regional housing information; and linkage and support to the Urgent Response Process and the Service Solutions Process
- Successful completion of the **MCCSS Compliance Review for DSO HNR**
- Continued focus on **increasing the number of applications** completed during the year, including reducing the number of appointment cancellations
- Completed the **internal review of the Service Navigation, Urgent Response, and Service Connections processes** at the DSO HNR to ensure integration, clarity of roles and interface with internal and external partners, and streamlined procedures
- Continued implementation of the **fiscal Housing Navigation Initiative** (ending March 2024)
- Continued collaboration with hospitals in the Hamilton-Niagara Region regarding streamlined and coordinated referral and planning activities including the development and **implementation of a protocol with St. Joseph's hospital**

- **Expanded community outreach** such as the delivery of information sessions to various stakeholders (within and outside of MCCSS funded partners) and families
- Leadership to and participation on the **DSO Provincial Network** and its committees
- Continued quality assurance activities including **implementation of the provincial DSO consumer experience survey**
- Continued participation in and leadership at **local, regional and provincial tables**

Stats for 2023 - 2024:

INTAKES

Intakes refer to the number of people who called the DSO HNR seeking information about adult developmental services and / or to access services. Not all Intakes materialize into eligibility confirmation requests.

- ✓ 751 intakes were completed

ELIGIBILITY CONFIRMATION

Eligibility confirmation refers to people who were requesting adult developmental services and who began the process of providing DSO HNR with information to support their eligibility for services. Upon receipt of all required information, DSO HNR is responsible for confirming a person's eligibility for MCCSS-funded adult developmental services and supports.

- ✓ DSO HNR was engaged in the eligibility confirmation process on behalf of 924 people.

- ✓ The DSO HNR confirmed eligibility on behalf of 584 people
 - ✓ 59% of people were confirmed **eligible** for adult developmental services
 - ✓ 41% of people were confirmed **ineligible** for adult developmental services

- ✓ 340 people remained in the eligibility confirmation process at March 31, 2024 (i.e. DSO HNR awaiting outstanding eligibility information)

APPLICATION COMPLETION

In order to be registered for / referred to MCCSS funded adult developmental services, the person must complete the Developmental Services Application Package.

- ✓ A total of 528 **applications** for adult developmental services were completed
 - ✓ 69% of applications were on behalf of new / first-time applicants (not already receiving services)
 - ✓ 8% of applications were on behalf of first-time applicants who were already receiving services (i.e. began receiving services before 2011)
 - ✓ 23% of applications were on behalf of people who needed a re-application as their needs had changed significantly since the last application

LINKAGE TO URGENT RESPONSE PROCESS

DSO HNR refers people to the local Urgent Response process when criteria are met.

- ✓ DSO HNR referred 40 unique people to the **Urgent Response process** in their community, and supported them through the process

LINKAGE TO SERVICE SOLUTIONS PROCESS

DSO HNR refers people to the local Service Solutions process when criteria are met.

- ✓ 7 people received Service Solutions planning

HOUSING NAVIGATION

- ✓ Housing Navigators connected with 254 people to share information and resources about affordable housing options in the Hamilton-Niagara Region.
- ✓ Housing Navigators supported 29 people in developing housing plans to access affordable housing
- ✓ Housing Navigators supported
 - 1,165 people through housing webinars
 - 468 people through the Housing Forum
 - 4 meetings with Family Network groups
 - 12 meetings with Housing Providers
 - 150 people at various in-service events

Key Goals for 2024 - 2025:

- Implementation of recommendations arising from the **internal reviews of the Service Navigation, Urgent Response, and Service Connections processes**
- **Expanded interface with hospitals** across the Hamilton-Niagara region to ensure seamless referral for people in hospital requiring discharge
- **Transition from 3 Housing Navigators to 1 Housing Navigator** as of April 1, 2024 (end of fiscal funding) and resulting need to review scope of role
- Continued **collaboration with MCCSS and the DSO Provincial Network** to enhance and coordinate activities to ensure consistency where required

- Continued **focused outreach to Indigenous communities** including having a monthly on-site presence at Community Living Six Nations
- Continued **focussed outreach to key referents and groups** to raise awareness about DSO HNR services regarding how and when to connect with the DSO HNR
- Further develop **consumer and family engagement initiatives** that will inform the DSO HNR
- Continued participation in and leadership at **local, regional and provincial tables**
- With the MCCSS, contribute to processes related to **Developmental Services Reform** (“Journey to Belonging” <https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-belonging-choice-and-inclusion>), and continued response to the Ontario Auditor General’s audit of DSO organizations

Passport Hamilton-Niagara Region

Key activities in 2023 - 2024:

- **Provision of the following core services:** funding approvals and onboarding; provision of virtual information and education; claims review and resolution; transfer processes for people moving in or out of region; management of changes with respect to a Passport recipient’s funding administration options
- Roll out and implementation of the revised **MCCSS Passport Guidelines**

- Completion of an external review of the Hamilton-Niagara Passport Program to ensure alignment to the new / developing Passport provincial program model which resulted in the **restructuring of the Hamilton-Niagara Passport Program**
- Creation of a new **consumer experience survey** specific to the Approvals and Registration process
- Continued **provincial participation** on the Ontario Passport Agency Network (OPAN) at the strategic and operational levels, including participation / leadership on the OPAN Secretariat
- Ongoing participation at various **regional and provincial tables**

Stats for 2023 - 2024:

- ✓ The Passport Program made 701 Passport funding approvals in 2023 – 2024.
- ✓ 7,059 unique individuals were already receiving or were newly approved for Passport funding as of March 31 2023 (\$81.61M annualized funding).
- ✓ Provincial Passport funding utilization rate: 67%. Passport Hamilton-Niagara utilization rate: 70%

Key Goals for 2024 - 2025:

- **Expanded outreach to consumers, and service providers** through enhanced education workshops
- Implementation of the **new consumer experience survey** specific to the Approvals and Registration process

- Continued implementation of **mass communication technology** to reach Passport recipients in a timely manner
- **Quality assurance activities**
- Continued leadership to and participation at **OPAN tables**
- With the MCCSS, contribute to processes related to **Developmental Services Reform** (“Journey to Belonging” <https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-belonging-choice-and-inclusion>)
- Continued participation and leadership at **local, regional and provincial Passport planning tables**

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys for 2023 - 2024

Children and Youth Services Program

Number of respondents: 63

Low response rate is due to the child / youth mental health access program closure on December 31, 2023.

Percentages may not always equal 100% due to rounding

Area Measured	Agree / Strongly Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree / Strongly Disagree %
It was easy for me to find out about Contact Hamilton	62	22	16

Area Measured	Agree / Strongly Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree / Strongly Disagree %
Greater understanding of Contact Hamilton services	81	11	8
I felt listened to by the Contact Hamilton staff	92	5	3
I felt that what was important to me was understood by Contact Hamilton staff	87	11	2
I now have a greater awareness of community services available to me	81	14	5
I felt Contact Hamilton staff provided me with clear and helpful information related to my situation	89	10	2
I would call Contact Hamilton again	92	5	3
I feel the next steps in getting service are clear to me	76	19	2
I felt Contact Hamilton was flexible in my meeting time	84	15	2
Overall, I am satisfied with the help that Contact Hamilton has provided me	94	5	2
Average	84	12	5

DSO HNR Program

DSO HNR received 213 responses to the provincial consumer experience survey up to Q4 2023-24.

The Province received a total of 1625 responses for the same period on behalf of all DSOs. DSO HNR makes up 13% of all provincial responses received.

For all categories but one, positive experiences for the DSO HNR were higher than the provincial average.

Area Measured	Hamilton-Niagara Results
Did you feel listened to?	Yes 61% Somewhat 15% <i>Yes + Somewhat 76%</i> No 19% I don't know 5%
Did you get the information you needed?	Yes 55% Somewhat 18% <i>Yes + Somewhat 73%</i> No 22% I don't know 5%
Are you happy with how long it took you to get the answers to your questions?	Yes 55% Somewhat 16% <i>Yes + Somewhat 71%</i> No 25% I don't know 5%
Did you learn about what community resources are available to you?	Yes 44% Somewhat 26% <i>Yes + Somewhat 70%</i>

Area Measured	Hamilton-Niagara Results
	No 21% I don't know 9%
Do you have clear next steps in getting information and / or services?	Yes 43% Somewhat 27% <i>Yes + Somewhat 70%</i> No 25% I don't know 6%
Overall, are you happy with the help / support you received?	Yes 57% Somewhat 20% <i>Yes + Somewhat 77%</i> No 24% I don't know 0%

Passport Hamilton-Niagara

Provincial consumer experience survey is in development via OPAN.