

Supportive Housing Services

Chatham, Ontario, Canada

Project Description: The Supportive Housing Services program at CMHA Lambton-Kent provides housing for individuals with mental illness and addictions who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. This program was established in 2002, and now supports over 200 residents in permanent housing.

Distinguishing Features: Due to the rural location and limited housing options, this program has negotiated the use of rent subsidies for a wide variety of units that would not typically qualify for funding.

This program has also partnered with the local hospital to provide discharge planning for in-patients, including housing support and other community referrals in an effort to break the institutional cycle.

Population Served: Homeless Individuals with Mental Health and Addiction issues

Website: lambtonkent.cmha.ca

Program case study (pages 11-14): <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Promising-Practices-in-Supportive-Housing-Resource-Guide.pdf>

SUMMARY

The Supportive Housing Services program at CMHA Lambton-Kent provides private housing for individuals with mental illness or addictions. The program started in 2002 and transitioned to a housing first initiative in 2013. Through this program, clients work with a case manager to find private housing in the community. The clients interact directly with local landlords, and Supportive Housing Services provides rent subsidies and other supports to help ensure continued housing.

As this program is located in a rural region of Ontario, housing options are limited. CMHA Lambton-Kent has negotiated the use of rent subsidies for units of varying sizes when there are no other housing options available. This extension of rent subsidies removes barriers within the rural housing market, allowing tenants finding housing more efficiently.

Hospital Discharge Planning

An extension of Supportive Housing Services includes hospital discharge planning for inpatients who are at risk of homelessness after their treatment program is complete. CMHA partners with Bluewater Health in an effort to break the institutional circuit and reduce homelessness within this particularly vulnerable population. This partnership works to connect patients with housing support and community referrals before they are discharged so they are not unsheltered during their transition back into the community

* Related Discharge Planning in Durham Region

This organizational partnership is particularly of note as it mirrors current development in Durham Region. As Durham Mental Health Services has recently announced further partnership with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, an expansion which aims to include housing services, the program at CMHA Lambton-Kent may provide valuable insight into successful partnership practices between hospitals and community support services.

Ontario Shores News Article: www.ontarioshores.ca/news_events/recent_news/ontario_shores_and_dmhs/

Canadian Mental Health Association

Lambton-Kent Branch

The Lambton-Kent branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association covers the Sarnia Lambton and Chatham-Kent regions of southern Ontario. The organization provides mental health support, crisis intervention, and other individualized services to those living with mental illness. Their goal is to help individuals develop the skills they need to independent, meaningful, and productive lives within the community.

lambtonkent.cmha.ca

CONNECTED ORGANIZATIONS

Bluewater Health

Bluewater Health is a hospital in Sarnia that provides a variety of mental health in-patient and out-patient support and community reintegration services, including a partnership with the Lambton-Kent branch of CMHA.

www.bluewaterhealth.ca