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Committee  
of the Whole

JAN 05 2017

Late Item# 5



November 22, 2016

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing this letter in support of gaining approval for ongoing funding of the second VPD police officer that currently is supporting the Assertive Community Treatment Teams (ACT) in Victoria.

ACT services provide a range of support to vulnerable clients with multiple barriers ranging from severe and persistent mental illness, to addictions with often related criminogenic needs. These services require a level of support possible with two VCP officers. ACT VCP officers play an invaluable and intrinsic role in the supportive relationship building with clients, both representing law enforcement in its supportive role in the community building process and in the commitment to providing safety for both client's and ACT care providers.

Currently, we have a growing number of client admissions who have historic records of violence that require police support to ensure the safety of us as practitioners who deliver frontline services in the community. With these growing numbers we have demonstrated the need to have more than one officer to assist the ACT teams on a regular basis.

After requesting feedback from many of the clinicians who make up these teams, and the current VPD officers who are in the roles, we have compiled the following feedback that strongly supports the need to fund this second VPD position on an ongoing basis:

The increased accessibility and support of a second officer has proven to:

- Enable accepting increased referrals and longer service provision of a client profile who is violent, that would otherwise be denied or refused existing ACT services.
- Better diversion of clients to enter in, and be supported within the Victoria Integrated Court system.
- Improved relations with other service providers, such as the Portland Housing Society and supports for frontline ACT staff to access clientele in the building.
- Help direct client care within team meetings through the skills and level of education of the VPD officers.
- Allow clinicians to complete more comprehensive and accurate client assessment within a safe environment resulting in improved client care/recovery.
- Builds stronger relationships and breaks down preexisting barriers between ACT profile clients and police as a whole.

- Permits Island Health staff to provide service clients who reside in sites that staff would not be allowed to go to without VPD accompaniment. Examples include administering medication, which ultimately assists in reducing recidivism for incarceration, police contact, homelessness and hospital visits.
- Provide a proactive approach, addressing public safety concerns, working from a decentralized place and in partnership with us.
- Approximately 25% of all current clients fall into a cohort that typically respond more effectively by positively changing their behavior when both police and ACT can address the issue or behavior with quick follow up immediately after an incident. This same cohort of clients often has a longstanding history of interfacing with the mental health act and health care providers, which can eventually prove ineffective as the client no longer sees these actions as consequences or incentives to change their behavior - such as being forced to go back to hospital, or changing their treatment plan.
- By having increased access to an additional police officer, this allows for quicker and more consistent follow up, which also likely helps mitigate future staff/public safety concerns with the same problematic behavior, reduce future interface with police, jails and hospital contact, especially with the client profile described above.

Yours Sincerely.

Kristin Louw Acting Team Lead Vicot and team members of ACT