

**THE DISTRICT OF TIMISKAMING
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**



**4rth Quarter Operational Overview
October 1 – December 31, 2020**

CAO Report to the Board

Kelly Black, Chief Administrative Officer

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Overview

The fourth quarter of 2020 saw the evolving COVID-19 Pandemic explode with the next wave, with incidents of illness, hospitalization and death increasing exponentially, and with regional then Province-wide shutdowns necessary. EMS staff and Paramedics have successfully implemented new protocols and procedures to mitigate the risks associated with exposure to this virus and continue to collaborate with partners to fight this pandemic.

Despite the challenges associated with a pandemic not seen in over a century, staff have worked to achieve significant successes during the fourth quarter of 2020. Successes include:

- Finalized reorganization of EMS structure
- Receipt of temporary Ontario health funding for a trial community Paramedicine program
- Receipt of an Off-Road Unit
- Ratification of a Collective Agreement

EMS Fleet Vehicle Update

In October, EMS received two 2020 ambulances, allowing staff to decommission vehicles that were no longer suitable for significant deployment time across the district. The service also received and initiated training on the Off-Road Unit (ORU) and are awaiting arrival of a PRU tow vehicle expected in early 2021.

Additionally, in late 2020, EMS staff received permission from the DTSSAB Board of Directors to donate one decommissioned ambulance to a local volunteer Fire Service, and one to Blanch River health for use in support of their nonurgent patient transfer service, a program that helps to shed calls from EMS, allowing for greater 9-1-1 availability.

Off-Road Unit

As has been previously shared, Paramedics and partners have worked together to receive a heavily modified John Deere Gator that will allow for response to remote areas where land ambulances can't effectively respond.



The Off-Road Response Unit is clearly identifiable and clearly recognizes those organizations who assisted EMS staff.

COVID 19 Pandemic

Despite the continued efforts by municipalities and service providers to help reduce incidence of COVID-19 disease transmission within Timiskaming District, and despite the early successes in holding positivity levels, Timiskaming District saw some significant disease transmission in late Q4. The significant increase in disease positivity in Timiskaming in December of 2020 resulted in greater efforts within EMS to protect staff. Paramedics have successfully managed to prevent the introduction of the Corona virus into the workplace, something that staff are extremely thankful of.

The presence of an ongoing pandemic has challenged staff with efforts to regularly meet with staff, but the necessity and technology has allowed for virtual Town Hall sessions that allow for open and bidirectional information sharing. This tool will be continued for staff sessions and for open communication with union partners moving forward.

While the Province has yet to define when the approved COVID-19 vaccines will become available in Timiskaming District, staff have been informed that Paramedics are included in Phase 1 rollout, meaning that our EMS staff will have early access to immunization.

Collective Bargaining

In late 2020, the employer and union successfully negotiated a Collective Agreement. Unlike the most recent Agreement, ratification was achieved without arbitration. Additionally, and interestingly, the ratification rate was 100%, something that speaks to the efforts made by members of both bargaining teams. Finally, the Agreement is a four-year deal, something that will allow for growth and labour peace for years to come. The negotiated agreement has allowed for reasonable increases in wages and benefits, while allowing for language that will permit the employer to further develop plans for service evolution.

Staff Planning and Reorganization

EMS posted four Superintendent positions in the fourth quarter of 2020, positions that will allow for the provision of 24/7 on-site service oversight. This action is linked to the reorganization plan for EMS that has been discussed for some time. The Superintendents will be in place for late January 2021, and will be aiding deployed staff, and allied agencies.

In the fourth quarter of 2020 the DSSAB was able to obtain some assistance through a secondment agreement with Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB wherein Chief Robert Smith would come in and help staff with several projects that were well under way. Rob has helped with the completion of contract negotiations, reorganization planning, and Deployment Plan redesign.

EMS Call Volume

While the COVID-19 Pandemic resulted in significant reduction in 9-1-1 requests for service early on, something experienced across all health sector agencies, the fourth quarter of 2020 saw volumes returning to more normal levels.

The flattening of the curve through the late spring and summer allowed for hospitals to start booking elective and less urgent procedures. Despite the significant COVID-19 case increases over the last few months, hospitals have not cancelled less urgent activities as they did in the first wave. This decision is being closely monitored to assess impact on the EMS service model. EMS service volumes, including interfacility operations, are set out by acuity in charts below. Additionally, the legislated Response Time Standard numbers for the third and fourth quarters are reflected in this document.

Call Volume Comparison

Q3 EMS Total Call Volume (by CACC assignment)					
Ambulance Base	Non-Urgent	Urgent	Emergent	Standby	Total
North	43	64	279	133	519
Central	6	24	76	53	159
South	7	93	253	187	540
District totals	56	181	608	373	1218

Q4 EMS TOTAL CALL VOLUME (by CACC assignment)					
Ambulance base	Non-Urgent	Urgent	Emergent	Standby	Total
North	32	85	274	135	526
Central	11	26	76	70	183
South	10	92	288	135	525
District totals	53	203	638	340	1234

Q3 EMS Interfacility Subset (by CACC assignment)				
Sending facility	Non-Urgent	Urgent	Emergent	Total
Kirkland Lake	40	34	21	95
Englehart	15	30	4	49
Temiskaming	17	19	19	55
Totals	72	83	44	199

Q4 EMS INTERFACILITY SUBSET (by CACC assignment)				
Sending facility	Non-Urgent	Urgent	Emergent	Total
Kirkland Lake	36	19	14	69
Englehart	26	31	8	65
Temiskaming	25	17	11	53
Totals	87	67	33	187

Response Time Standard Comparison

Q3 Provincial Response Time Standard Report (values are %)			
Subset	Target	Actual	Target to Actual Variance +/-
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	35%	55.55	+20.55
CTAS 1	50%	47.37	-2.63
CTAS 2	65%	71.32	+6.32
CTAS 3	75%	78.42	+3.42
CTAS 4	80%	84.57	+4.57
CTAS 5	90%	92.10	+2.10
Q4 PROVINCIAL RESPONSE TIME STANDARD REPORT (values are %)			
Subset	Target	Actual	Target to Actual Variance +/-
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	35	52.00	+17.00
CTAS 1	50	51.85	+1.85
CTAS 2	65	71.11	+6.11
CTAS 3	75	78.30	+3.30
CTAS 4	80	85.86	+5.86
CTAS 5	90	92.58	+2.58

ONTARIO WORKS

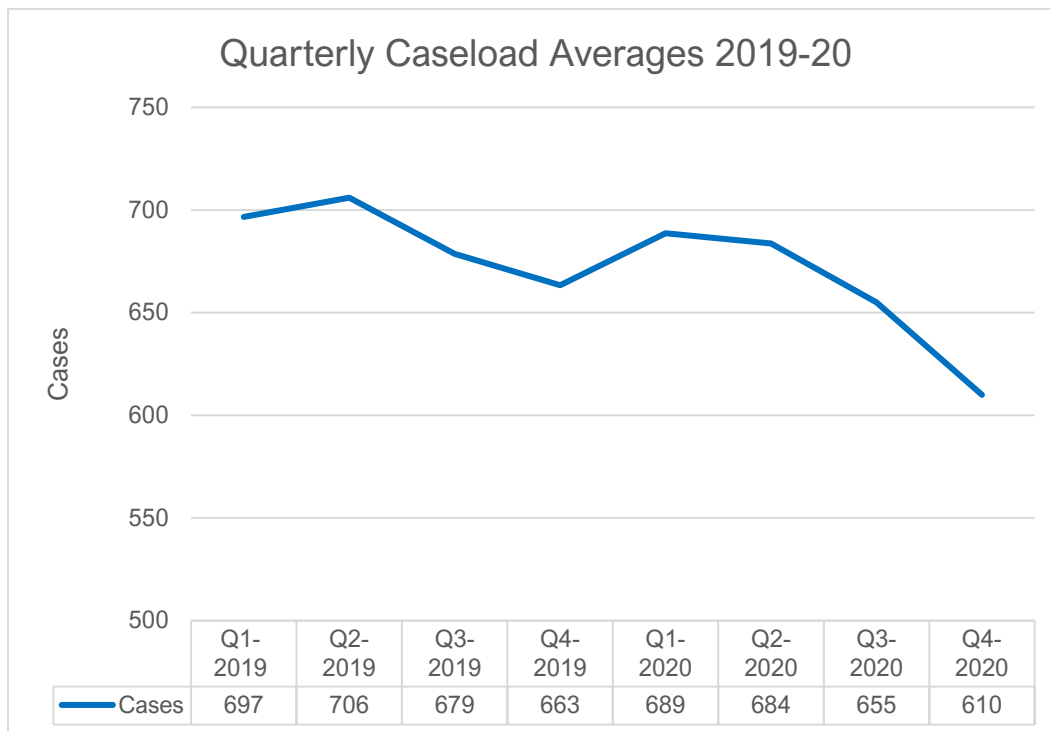
Caseload

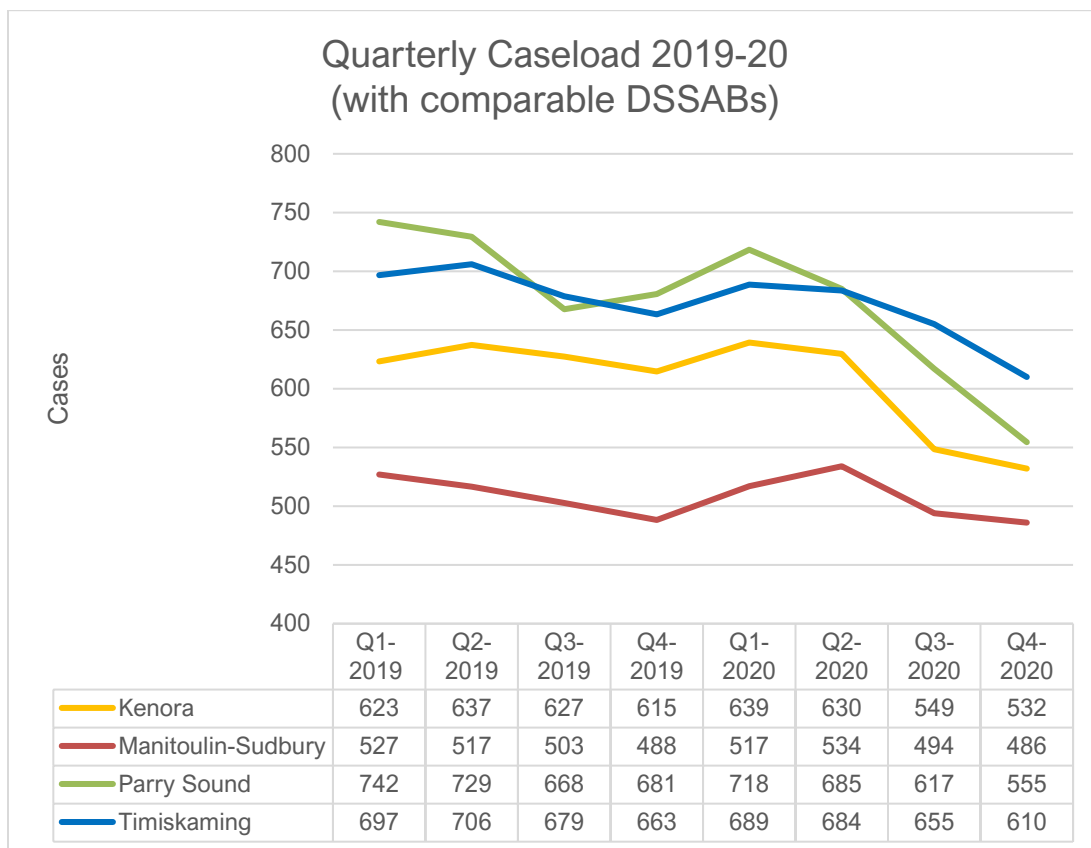
The fourth quarter of 2020 had an average of 610 cases. A decrease of 3.5% from the fourth quarter in 2019 with 663 cases).

There was a 1.3% decrease in caseload from a Northern Regional perspective, and provincially the drop was 1.8%. Delivery agents and DSSABs continue to follow this trend in 2020.

This trend is primarily due to the rapid implementation of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB, and the province's centralized Ontario Works emergency assistance. Furthermore, employment opportunities have improved in the essential retail and food services (take out and drive-thru operations.)

Below: Charts showing Timiskaming and Comparable DSSAB caseloads by quarter:





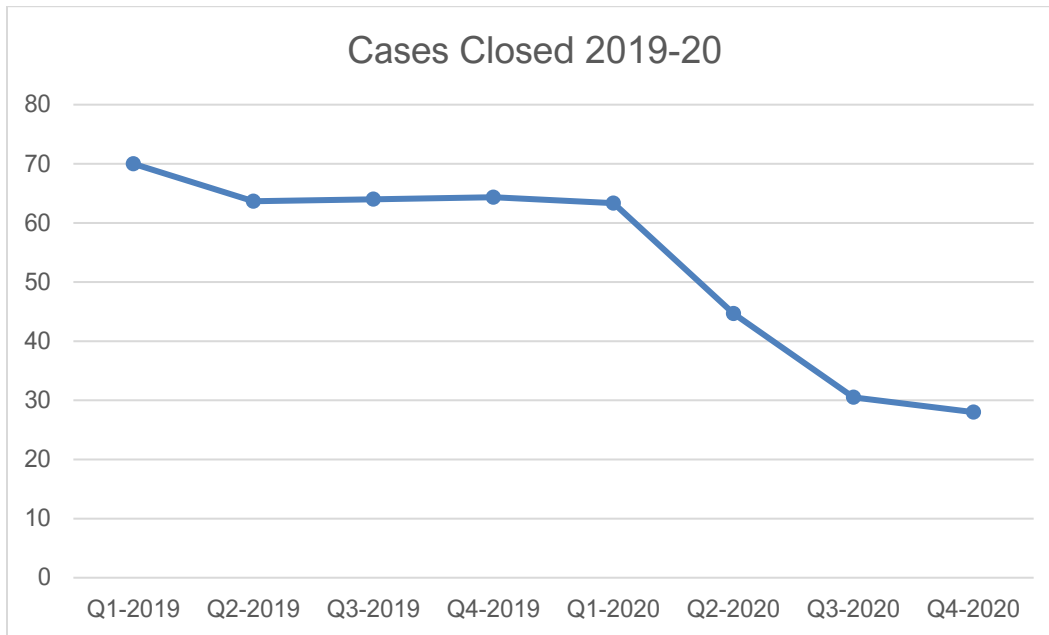
Applications

The fourth quarter continued the reduction in applications, with an average of 18 per month. This is a decrease of 62% from the same quarter last year when the average was 47. This corresponds with the reduced caseload averages, the CERB and the income safety it provided and removing the need for social assistance. All cases processed were eligible and granted aid.

Furthermore, applications were processed from the point of client contact to the grant in three business days. The requirement under the service contract is four business days.

Case Closures

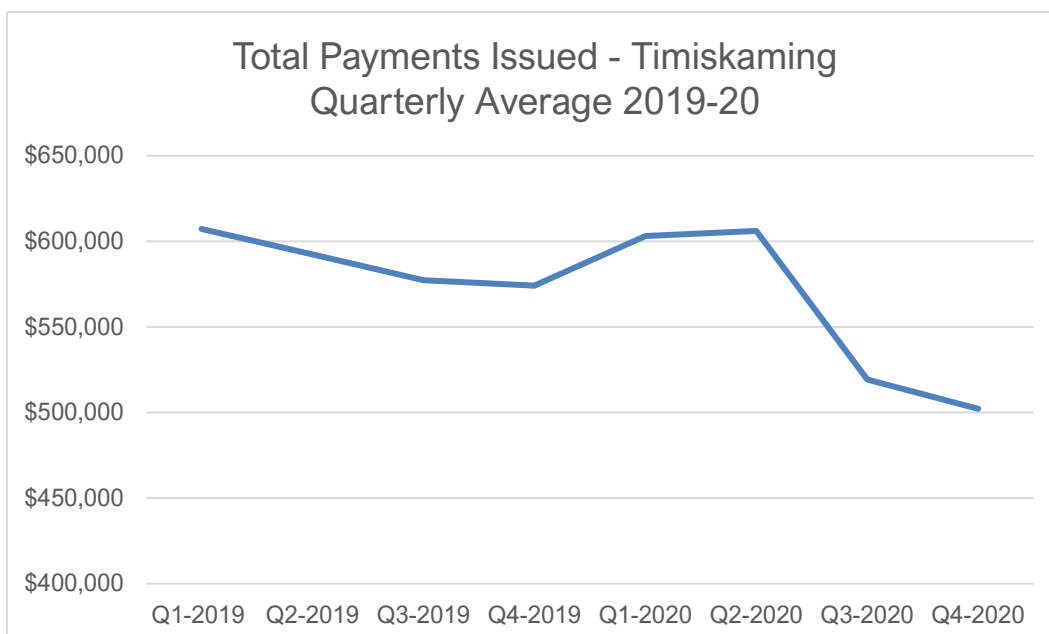
The fourth quarter average was 28 cases per month, from an average of 37 in 2019. This represents a decrease of 24% from the same period last year. This shift results from the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary suspension of employment supports activities during the previous six months. Please note that contract employment supports targets were suspended for 2020 as a result of the pandemic.



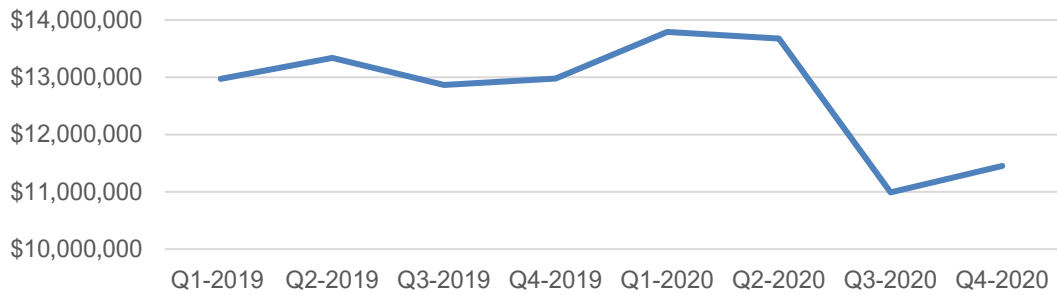
Social Assistance Payments

The total amount of social assistance benefits issued in the fourth quarter averaged \$502,137 per month. This was a 12.5% decrease from the same quarter in 2019 when the average was \$574,091. This decrease is associated with reducing caseload and a corresponding lower demand for other benefits such as employment supports and medical travel.

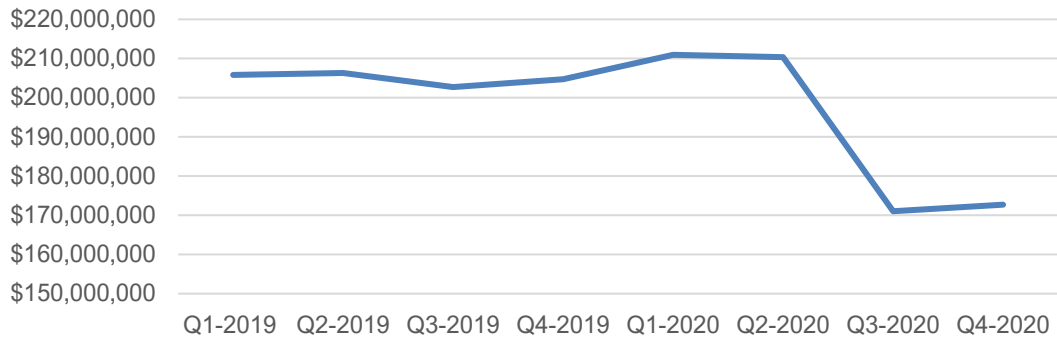
This quarter, the average monthly cost-per-case is \$823 per month from \$866 per month last year, a 4.9% decrease.



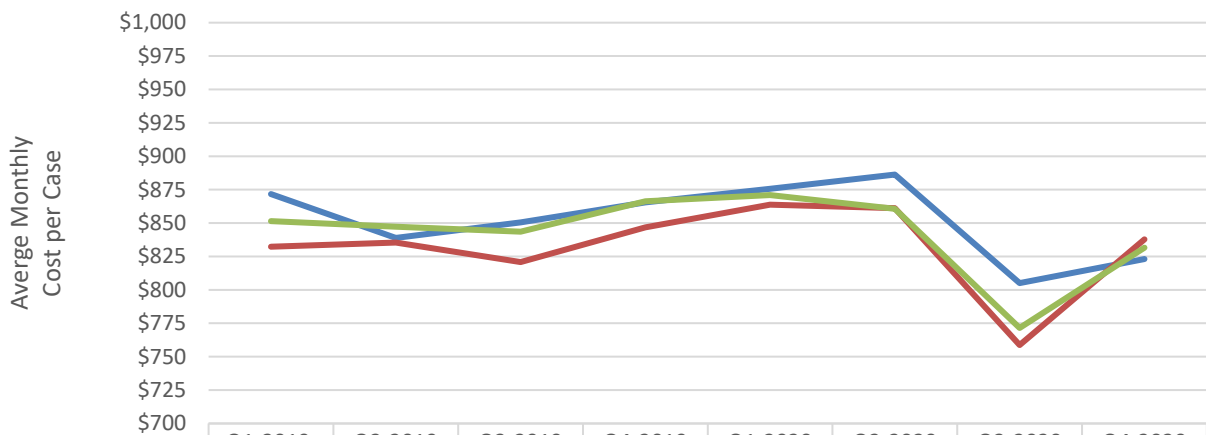
Total Payments Issued - North and North East Regions Quarterly Average 2019-20



Total Payments Issued - All of Ontario Quarterly Average 2019-20



Average Cost per Case (District, Regional, Provincial)



	Q1-2019	Q2-2019	Q3-2019	Q4-2019	Q1-2020	Q2-2020	Q3-2020	Q4-2020
— Timiskaming	\$872	\$839	\$851	\$866	\$876	\$886	\$805	\$823
— Region	\$832	\$835	\$821	\$847	\$864	\$861	\$759	\$838
— Ontario	\$852	\$847	\$844	\$866	\$871	\$861	\$772	\$832

Program Accountability

The Enhanced Verification Program (EVP) was suspended in March 2020 due to COVID-19. The Ministry intended to relaunch the program in the summer months and was delayed. We volunteered to continue participation in the EVP process beginning in September; however, this continues to be suspended due to Ministry programming issues. The EVP program is now active and engaging in audits.

Appeals and Internal Reviews continue. Fraud investigations are undergoing preliminary action and evidence gathering but without the fieldwork and in-person meetings and interrogations. Due to the pandemic, the work is mainly research and evidence gathering. In-person interrogations are suspended.

Program Operations

The Ontario Works program is at 100% of its frontline staffing level.

Positions include:

- Eight Caseworkers (four per office)
- Two Case-Aides (one per office)
- One position focused on Program Integrity (Enhanced Verification Process, Fraud Investigations, Appeals, and Family Support)

Management include:

- Director for Client Services.
- Two Ontario Works Supervisors. One Supervisor in each office (North and South) was recruited in December 2020.

HOUSING SERVICES

Central Wait List

In the last quarter of 2020, the Housing Services Program processed 48 new applications for rent-g geared-to-income with 12 being reactivated applications. The department also processed 68 cancelations for various reasons.

20 applicant households were housed in this quarter. As at December 31, 2020, 252 eligible households are on the centralized wait list.

Table 1: Applications and Wait List Activities

As at Dec 31 st	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of Eligible Applicants					
With Dependents	34	24	23	46	46
No Dependents	66	54	61	87	111
Seniors	157	154	126	144	95
Total	257	232	210	277	252
Number of Applicants Housed October – December					
With Dependents	33	22	28	20	18
No Dependents	22	30	26	35	1
Seniors	28	37	37	9	1
Total	83	89	91	64	20
New Applications Received October – December					
With Dependents	69	52	52	15	11
No Dependents	12	109	112	24	26
Seniors	4	6	7	14	11
Ineligible	10	36	3	7	1
Total	85	167	171	53	48

Applicant Average Wait Time

Figure 2 below demonstrates the average wait time for an applicant in the District of Timiskaming in 2020.

Table 2: Wait Time

Municipality	Days on Waitlist
Earlton	168.50
Englehart	246.57
Larder Lake	307.67
Elk Lake	108.20
New Liskeard	1,322.42
Haileybury	699.00
Kirkland Lake	398.50

Table 3 below outlines move-ins and move-outs in the last quarter for the past 4 years.

Table 3: Unit Activity

Activity	2017	2018	2019	2020
Move-In	23	18	22	20
Move-Out	15	13	22	22

Provincially/Federally Funded Programs

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative & Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (COCHI & OPHI)

In 2019 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) released service manager allocations for the COCHI and OPHI funding programs. Both COCHI and OPHI are new funding programs under the National Housing Strategy (NHS) and allocations will be released to service managers in three-year Phases;

- Phase I (2019-20 through to 2021-22)

On May 19, 2020 we received confirmation of 2020-2021 allocation of \$65,077.00 for COCHI and \$169,700.00 for OPHI. As at December 31, 2020, most of the funds have been committed and spent.

Table 4: Phase I COCHI and OPHI Funding

Program Name	Component	2020-2021
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)	Repairs	\$65,077.00
Ontario Priority Housing Initiative (OPHI)	Ontario Renovates	\$60,730.00
	Homeownership	\$80,000.00
	Rent Supplement	\$12,000.00
	Housing Support Services	\$8,485.00
	Service Manager Admin fee	\$8,485.00
TOTAL		\$234,777.00

As of December 31, 2020, we were able to assist 21 households with funding allocated to support services with the primary reasons that individuals required assistance being for: rental arrears and moving costs. We were able to enter into rent supplement agreements to provide 4 additional units of affordable housing in Timiskaming. Additionally, to date through the Ontario renovates component, we have been able to assist 23 households with much needed repairs to their homes.

Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) Housing Allowance

In June 2016, service managers received letters announcing allocations under the Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) which is to be delivered under the Investment in Affordable Housing 2014 Extension (IAH-E) program as a joint initiative between the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Our allocation for 2020/2021 is \$37,200.00 which will provide a housing allowance to over 12 household in the district.

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

COHB is a jointly funded, federal-provincial housing allowance program. The purpose of the COHB is to increase the affordability of rental housing by providing an income-tested, portable housing benefit payment directly to eligible households in housing need that are on, or are eligible to be on, a social housing waiting list and to households in housing need living in community housing.

The COHB program began in April 2020 and will continue until the end of the 2028-29 fiscal year; subject to annual budget approvals.

For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, \$81,770.00 of funding was allocated through COHB and we have been able to provide shelter assistance to 18 households in the District of Timiskaming through this program. All funds have been committed for this fiscal year.

Timiskaming has been allocated \$107,143.00 for the upcoming 2021-2022 fiscal year which will start April 1, 2021 and we hope to be able to assist additional households with funding to offset shelter costs.

Social Services Relief Fund-2 (SSRF-2)

In the summer of 2020, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced \$362 million in new provincial and federal funding under a second phase of the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to help protect vulnerable people from COVID-19. The Social Services Relief Fund has been effective in supporting the District of Timiskaming to respond quickly, adapt services, and address the housing and economic impacts of COVID-19 in our communities. The additional investment of SSRF Phase Two helped our district continue to protect homeless shelter staff and residents, expand rent support programming and create longer-term housing solutions.

Prior to receiving SSRF Phase 2 funds, we were asked to submit a business case to the Ministry. The business case process provided an opportunity for the DTSSAB to outline how our initial planning allocation would be used and assisted the Ministry in ensuring that funds were being directed to the communities most in need.

The business cases were reviewed by the Ministry and the District of Timiskaming was approved in the amount of **\$671,165**.

We are planning to allocate most of the funds under the capital component. This will allow for a partnership with Zack's Crib to purchase a building to operate a safe bed facility for homeless individuals at the appropriate level. In addition, the renovation of a duplex owned by the Timiskaming DSSAB is planned to be able to operate transitional housing. Funding will also be allocated to provide rental and utility arrears to eligible individuals in the district.

COVID-19 Response

In the 4th quarter of 2020, the Housing Services Program remains aware of safety measures due to Covid-19. Safety is our priority and we continue promoting best practices during the Pandemic.

The Housing Services staff has remained diligent in supporting the tenants throughout the Pandemic. Staff has remained flexible through the past several months and continues to adapt as required to ensure the health and safety of their team and the tenants.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Introduction

Child care and EarlyON/ON y va programs returned to a new normal as of September 1, 2020 after being closed for the better part of the year as a result of the March 17 state of emergency. Although programs were faced with unprecedented challenges, all of the District's centres offering full-day programming gradually reopened in July and August and continued to operate at reduced capacity for the remainder of the year.

Centre pour enfants Timiskaming Child Care offered home child care services throughout the year.

Most programs chose to shut down for two weeks over the holidays with the exception of Keepers of the Circle offering care to December 23rd. All programs were expected to reopen on January 4. On Monday December 21, the Premier of Ontario ordered that elementary schools operate virtually from January 4 to 8 and that child care centres were prohibited from serving school-aged children during this time with the exception of emergency child care.

The Province also announced that the Ministry of Education was implementing a targeted emergency child care program to support parents of school-aged children that may not be able to support their child's learning/care at home. The Children's Services team and child care supervisors worked together over the Christmas break to organize the implementation of Emergency Child Care for the first week of January.

Child Care

A. Re-opening of Child Care Centres

Programs across the district staggered re-opening over the summer months based on safety requirements, screening processes, community needs, available staffing and operated at reduced capacity for the remainder of year to allow for social distancing and other recommended public health measures.

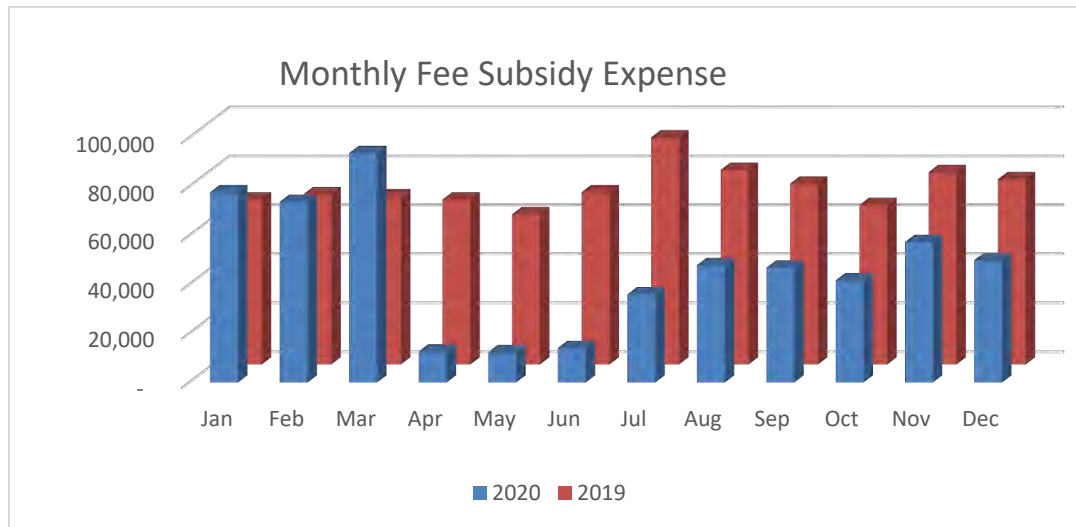
B. Safe Restart Funding

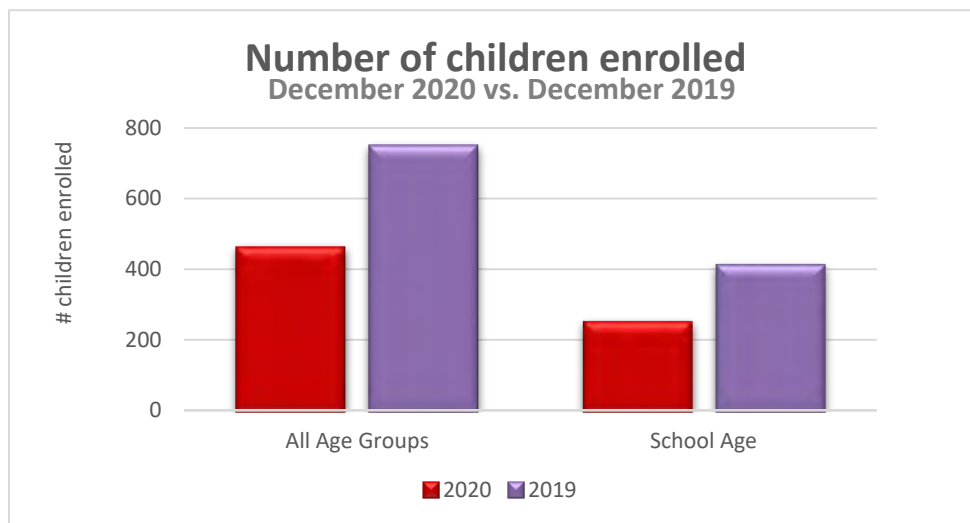
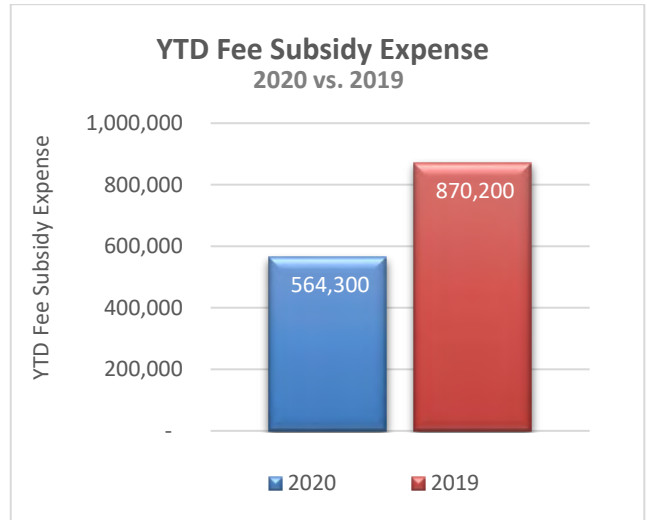
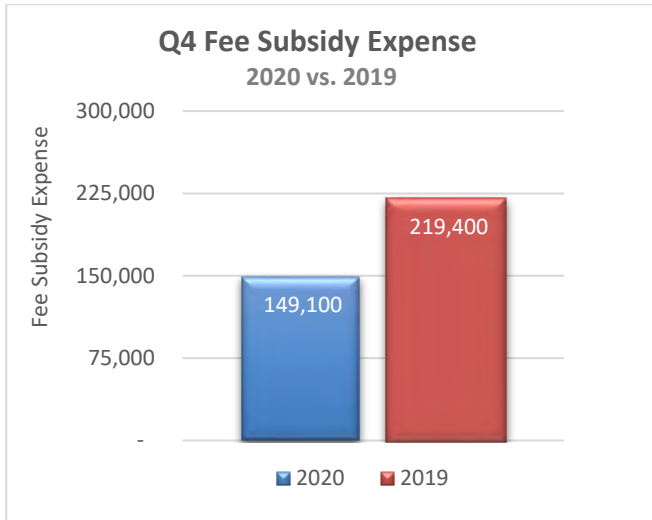
Safe Restart Funding was flowed to service managers as a one-time funding allocation to assist in covering costs incurred by child care operators for: additional personal protective equipment (PPE such as gloves, gowns, etc.); enhanced cleaning; additional staff to meet health and safety requirements; support for short term vacancies as operators transition to return to full capacity; and minor capital required in accordance with Ministry's reopening operational guidance or local public health requirements.

The allocation for the DTSSAB is \$876,839. Child care operators claimed expenses on a monthly basis. Safe Restart Funding must be spent by March 31, 2021 (initial deadline was December 31, 2020). Claims YTD are expected to total less than \$200,000 leaving \$676,000 to offset additional pressures incurred in the first months of 2021.

C. Utilization rates

The following charts illustrate the monthly fee subsidy expense and children served compared to 2019.





D. Family Discount

The family discount program will be reinstated as of January 1, 2021 after being canceled in 2020 to offset additional costs incurred with CEWS (Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy) top-up available through the Federal Government. We may have to cancel the program should the Ministry revise its funding approach later this year.

E. Early Learning Preschool Readiness Programs (ELSRP)

The ELSRP programs that were initially expected to reopen January 2021 have been suspended until further notice as community activities related to preschool readiness are not possible. The Children's Services team is currently discussing the possibility of offering a condensed summer version of the program with providers.

F. Capital Projects

School boards and CMSMs/DSSABs received a memo on December 16, 2020 inviting them to submit joint requests for capital funding for child care centre additions and/or renovation projects in schools by January 29, 2021. At this time, only one potential project has been identified. If the funding request is approved, this project would add 6-10 infant spaces in the District of Timiskaming.

Discussions are also well under way with other child care centres regarding renovations that would see considerable floor plan changes that would not only improve program quality but also alleviate existing safety challenges.

EARLYON/ON y va Child and Family Centres

EarlyON/ON y va Child and Family Centres were allowed to reopen for on-site visits as of September 1, provided that advance registration was completed. Centre de santé Communautaire du Temiskaming, Keepers of the Circle, Centre pour enfants Timiskaming Child Care chose to slowly reopen and moved most of their programming outdoors as an added safety measure. Stricter measures are anticipated in 2021, as well as, further closures.

Children's Services Quality Assurance Program

The Children's Services' quality assurance program continued throughout the year. During the latter part of 2020, the Quality Assurance Coordinator:

- Continued to provide information from the province and local health unit with respect to COVID-19, and safety precautions
- Helped/advised programs meet demands for: screening, physical distancing, PPE, staffing issues, age groupings, and cleaning
- Supported discussions between child care programs and schools
- Provided training through online sites
- Managed serious occurrence reporting, provided support to programs
- Prepared the 2021 Professional Learning plan
- Continued planning for Forest School training slated to take place in 2021

Forest School Canada, in partnership with Hopi Martin, will be offering a Forest and Nature School Practitioners Course to a total of 22 local educators in 2021. Upon completion, educators will be certified and have all of the tools necessary to safely and effectively establish and run Forest and Nature School programs.

Participants will be participating in 3-5 hours of virtual course work, readings, assignments and meetings per week through 2021, as well as, a 5 day in-person session currently slated for the fall.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Review - 2020 Initiatives/Activities (Q4)

Key non-confidential Human Resources Q4 initiatives and/or activities included, but were not limited to:

- **Ongoing Leader and Emergency Response Team (ERT) support re: COVID-19**

The leadership team and Emergency Response Team continued to follow and/or adjust workplace practices and protocols relating to COVID-19, as well as respond to concerns from the Leadership Team, as needs arose. This will be ongoing into 2021
- **WSIB Excellence Program**

Participation in the WSIB Excellence Program will continue through 2021.
- **EMS Negotiations**

The negotiating committees resumed talks on November 23, 2020. The parties successfully negotiated a renewal of the SEIU Collective Agreement, for a 4-year term. The Agreement was unanimously ratified by Paramedics on December 7, 2020. Following DTSSAB Board of Directors' approval, changes will begin to be implemented.
- **New Leader Onboarding Tool**

A new tool has been developed to assist with successfully onboarding leaders and/or transitioning existing staff into leadership roles. The tool provides more fulsome and structured support to incumbents coming into their new roles and assists with ensuring consistency in the orientation process throughout our different programs/departments. This new format has been adapted from HR's enhanced hiring process for leadership recruitment and is focused on ensuring that an individual's suitability and competencies for a leadership role is effectively monitored and leaders are well supported. The objective is to increase the likelihood of successful hires into leadership roles, which is critical to the organization.
- **2020 Recognition of Years of Service**

While this year did not allow DTSSAB staff to come together to acknowledge our staff's efforts throughout the year and celebrate years of service achievements, 31 staff were proudly honoured for important years of service milestones. 2020 also marked the 15-year anniversary of the DTSSAB's direct delivery of EMS operations, with several EMS employees being recognized for their 15 years of service.

2020 Q4 Recruitment & Staffing Summary

Closing Date	Position	Recruitment Status	Details / Comments
Sep 28	Ontario Works Ontario Works Supervisor North	Filled internally Temporary full-time, 12-month assignment	New OW leadership structure (previously 1 District position)
Sep 28	Ontario Works Ontario Works Supervisor South	Filled internally Temporary full-time, 12-month assignment	New OW leadership structure (previously 1 District position)
Dec 2	Ontario Works Eligibility Review/Case Presenting Officer	Unfilled / No applicants Temporary full-time, 12-month assignment	Vacancy due to internal movement to OW leadership. Staffing to be addressed in 2021
Dec 9	Ontario Works Ontario Works Caseworker South	In progress Temporary full-time, 12-month assignment	Vacancy due to internal movement to OW leadership
Nov 20	Housing Services Program Assistant – Maintenance Services	Filled internally Permanent full-time	Position was vacant due to permanent incumbent departure
Nov 30	Children's Services Children's Services Manager	Filled internally Permanent full-time	Position was previously filled by a temporary contract
Nov 30	Children's Services Children's Services Supervisor	Filled internally Permanent full-time	New CS leadership structure (new position). Anticipated start date is end of Q1 2021
Jan 11 2021	Emergency Medical Services EMS Superintendent (4 positions)	In progress Permanent full-time	New EMS leadership structure (new positions)

Staffing Update

- In September, an existing staff member was temporarily appointed for a confidential assignment in HR, providing HR support, in preparation for an upcoming retirement. There will be an official job posting in 2021, upon formalizing HR staffing needs.
- In early September a secondment agreement was formalized with the Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB for interim staffing support to the EMS leadership team.
- With several upcoming hires into leadership positions, there is a lot of enthusiasm about having our programs/departments well-supported for optimal success and operations.