

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 March 21

OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES & LABOUR RELATIONS SERVICES

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 033-13 re “Overview of Human Resources & Labour Relations Services” be received for information.

Key Points

- The Human Resources and Labour Relations Service Area is a diverse group that supports the efficient delivery of programs and services through the services it provides for all staff throughout the Health Unit.
- Changes over the years have resulted in continuous improvement of the services provided by HRLRS to meet the needs of the organization. Changes will continue as HRLRS finds efficiencies that decrease the resources need to do transactional work, and focuses more on strategic initiatives that add value to the organization.

Description of Services

Human Resources and Labour Relations Services (HRLRS) includes Reception Services, Student Placement, and Library Services as well as human resources management. The goal of human resources management is to provide a fair and positive work environment that effectively attracts, develops, motivates and retains a diverse workforce. By implementing strategies and excellent customer service, HRLRS not only supports the mission, strategic plan, and business plans of the organization, but also increases employee satisfaction and productivity. HR strategies that impact the work environment and also control labour costs include: effective recruitment and retention of staff; managing absenteeism; reducing the risk of damage related to lack of compliance with employment legislation and litigation; realigning jobs and streamlining processes and paper systems to achieve efficiency; and, enhancing productivity through consistent performance. [Appendix A](#) provides a more detailed listing of the services provided by HRLRS, which are summarized below.

The core Human Resources group (HR) are human resources professional staff who serve as internal consultants on all matters related to the legislation, policies, and collective agreements that govern all aspects of employment. These matters include: organizational design and staff planning, recruitment, orientation, benefits and pension administration, compensation, performance management and discipline, labour negotiations and grievances, job evaluation, attendance and leaves, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims, return to work plans and accommodations, human resources information management, human resources metrics, career and succession planning, student placements, and the interpretation of employment and labour relations legislation, etc. The HR group shares the responsibility for human resources management with all Health Unit management staff. It is through management consultation with HR and the implementation of HR strategies that this responsibility is carried out effectively and consistently across the organization.

The Receptionists provide service to the public seeking information about Health Unit programs and services by responding to questions from the public on the phone or in person. This requires a good knowledge of all the programs and services and the key people to contact for each of the programs and services. The receptionists handle all incoming and outgoing deliveries, couriers and mail. The receptionists at 50 King Street also back up the Vaccine Clerk who is located in the reception area, by packing and recording vaccines for pickup by health care providers' offices, etc. In Strathroy, the receptionists also support program staff by preparing documents, booking appointments, etc.

The Library staff provide a full range of public health library services to all Health Unit staff, in collaboration with public health libraries across the province (book loans, etc.). Under the Shared Library Services Partnership, funded by Public Health Ontario (PHO), the librarians also provide hub library services (which consists of six key services such as answering reference questions or conducting literature searches) to five client health units in Southwestern Ontario and the Niagara Region.

Student education and placements involve students and academic organizations from across Ontario and occasionally outside of the province and outside of the country. HR is currently reviewing the policy, processes and procedures related to all student experiences. In addition to quantifying the increasing demands for student experiences, HR is developing standardized documents and procedures to address risks and identify efficiencies, as well as providing the data that will enable the Health Unit to determine its capacity to meet the demand for student experiences.

Target Population / Internal Clients

As outlined in [Appendix A](#), the core Human Resources group provides services to staff at all levels within the Health Unit. HR staff also have regular contact with members of the public who are interested in career or volunteer opportunities or in student placements. In addition to the full range of library services provided to Health Unit staff, hub library services are provided to staff at five other health units through the Shared Library Services Partnership. Direct services to the public are also provided through reception services.

Key Performance Measures

Evolution of Human Resources and Labour Relations Services: In 2010, the organizational structure of the Health Unit changed from five program service areas and Corporate Services under the Office of the Medical Officer of Health to three program service areas (Oral Health, Communicable Disease and Sexual Health Services; Family Health Services; Environmental Health and Chronic Disease Prevention Services), the Office of the Medical Officer of Health, and three administrative services areas (Finance & Operations; Human Resources and Labour Relations; Information Technology). With the addition of Library Services and the Student Education Program to the Human Resources and Labour Relations Service area, some reorganization of responsibilities within the HR core group also occurred: supervisory responsibilities were delegated to the HR Officers, and other work requiring HR professional skills and knowledge shifted to an HR Coordinator position. Also, since 2012, an Administrative Assistant to the Director has been providing administrative support to both HRLRS and Finance & Operations. This restructuring within HRLRS was accompanied by a review of processes and procedures to enhance customer service and facilitate communication with other service areas. By focusing on having the right person do the right job at the right time, HRLRS has been turning its attention to HR strategies as efficiencies in transactional work were realized.

Performance Indicators: Through annual reviews of year end processes, HR is addressing the need for more HR metrics to guide HR strategic planning. Databases have been modified to incorporate new fields and new reports have been developed. These changes have increased the ability to provide statistics on key performance indicators in the future. Some of the Service Level Measures on page 4 of [Appendix A](#) are reporting on metrics that have not been available in the past.

Recruitment and Orientation: Different processes have been initiated for managing the transactional work related to recruitment and orientation, attendance reporting, and records management. For example, the recruitment process now involves less paperwork, reduced preparation time for interviews, and a reduction in the number of staff hours spent in interviews.

Return to Work: Significant work has also been done to improve the Return to Work program, through consultation with external service providers and union representatives. There has been an increase in the quality of the information that is collected and used to ensure that employees are returned to work safely as soon as it is feasible. This work will make the process of developing Return to Work plans less time-consuming in most future situations.

Review of Student Placement Process: When the Student Placement Coordinator's position became vacant last fall, HR initiated a review of the position, and related policies and procedures. That review is ongoing, and includes: classification and timing of requests; identification of processes and procedures to facilitate placements, including preceptor training; assessment of the changing demands for student opportunities and the capacity to meet those demands; integration of student placements with other HR and volunteer processes; and reduction of risks (written agreements for every student and student/preceptor training needs). HR is collaborating with other health units through the Student Placement, Education and Preceptorship Network, sponsored by PHO.

Library Services: Changes in the Library Services have resulted from the implementation of Shared Library Services Partnership in 2012, involving standardization of statistics across the hub libraries, increased flexibility in the ability to provide service to all clients (health unit staff), and increased skill development through training for staff on copyright and on the use of the Virtual Library.

Volunteer Program: With recent changes in public health programs, two long-standing volunteer programs were no longer needed: vision screening in schools and the Let's Grow mail-outs coordinated by Hutton House volunteers. CERV volunteers now serve as the primary source of volunteers for influenza immunization clinics. It is challenging to find new experiences to attract and retain other new volunteers, but some success has been achieved through collaboration with community partners.

Budget Overview

Staffing Level

The 2013 budget includes 8.4 full-time equivalents (FTEs), plus 1.0 FTE funded by PHO:

- 1.0 Director
- 2.0 HR Officers (Non-union)
- 1.0 HR Coordinator (Non-union)
- 0.5 Administrative Assistant to the Director (CUPE Local 101)
- 2.0 Librarians (CUPE Local 101); 1.0 FTE Librarian is 100% funded by PHO
- 2.4 Receptionists (CUPE Local 101)
- 0.5 Student Coordinator (ONA) (vacant)
- 9.4 Total full-time equivalents**

Operating Budget

Expenditure Category	Amount	% of Budget
Personnel Costs	\$ 812,080	89.4%
Administrative Expenses	8,420	0.9%
Purchased Services	22,276	2.5%
Materials & Supplies	57,544	6.3%
Furniture & Equipment	1,000	0.1%
Other Expenses	6,825	0.8%
Total Expenditures	\$ 908,145	100.0%
Less 100% Shared Library Services Partnership (SLSP) funding	(110,000)	
Total Cost-Shared Expenditures (Net)	\$ 798,145	

Notes:

- Administrative expenses include staff development, training and travel
- Purchased services relate to advertising costs for recruitment.
- The \$110,000 for SLSP funding was allocated in 2012 to cover \$75,000 of salaries and benefits costs and \$35,000 for collections and operating expenses directly related to SLSP service provision.

Public Health Specific Services/ Requirements

HR staff members have accumulated a bank of knowledge related to the work done by public health professionals, and have developed procedures and role-specific tools to enhance the effectiveness of the services that HR provides to the organization (e.g., recruitment, student placement, and absence management). The Organizational Standard sets out numerous requirements under Human Resources Strategy and Staff Development which are in large part overseen by Human Resources.

Public Health Units are required to meet many requirements for employers under Ontario legislation. Sometimes the legislation is consistent with the requirements of the Ontario Public Health Standards (e.g., the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act is consistent with the equitable distribution of services through application of the Social Determinants of Health). More often, the legislation imposes other significant obligations on health units, without providing any funding to meet those requirements.

Under the Foundational Standard, the Library supports Research and Knowledge Exchange, but also supports the development of evidence-based programs and services. In addition, the Health Unit's participation in the Shared Library Services Partnership sponsored by Public Health Ontario is in line with the Principle of Collaboration outlined in the Organizational Standard.

This report was prepared by Ms. Louise Tyler, Director, Human Resources & Labour Relations.



Bryna Warshawsky, MDCM, CCFP, FRCPC
Acting Medical Officer of Health