



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

## Media Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 27, 2019**

### **COUNTY COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT 'THE WELLINGTON FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTING LIFE AND PREVENTING SUICIDE'**

**WELLINGTON COUNTY, ON** – At today's County Council meeting, Council adopted a resolution to partner with the Canadian Mental Health Association of Waterloo-Wellington (CMHA WW) to lead the work of promoting life and preventing suicide in Wellington County, under the "Here4Hope" strategy. This strategy was developed in partnership with the *Canadian Mental Health Association of Waterloo-Wellington (CMHA)*, *Wellington County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)* and the *County of Wellington*.

This resolution goes hand in hand with a recent Community Safety and Policing Grant submitted by OPP Inspector Scott Lawson, on behalf of the Police Services Board, to the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Wellington County OPP has applied for a three-year grant valued at \$180,000 per year to implement the Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team (IMPACT) – Suicide Prevention/Postvention Support Programme.

"This partnership between the County of Wellington, OPP and CMHA WW is the first of its kind," said Warden Kelly Linton. "People are our greatest priority. It has become increasingly clear that mental health is fundamentally interconnected with physical and social well-being and health outcomes. This strategy and Community Safety and Policing Grant will also be closely intertwined with a community wellness programme that CMHA Waterloo-Wellington will be leading."

The proposed partnership would enable CMHA WW to employ Cecilia Marie Roberts, in partnership with the County of Wellington, for three years to continue to lead and support the work of promoting life and preventing suicide in Wellington County.

"This strategy will not only equip our staff with the tools, support and resources to help themselves and their loved ones, but over 850 County employees will be able to assist others who may be struggling in the community," commented Scott Wilson, CAO of the County of Wellington. "Many people in our community have been either directly or indirectly affected by suicide. There is a great need for support in this area. Over the years, the County has implemented a number of programmes dedicated to wellness. Building on that work, the County will continue to set short and long-term objectives dedicated specifically to mental health."

The development of the "Here4Hope" *Wellington Framework for Promoting Life and Preventing Suicide* was developed by Cecilia Marie Roberts, Suicide Prevention Lead at CMHA WW and it provides a road map for implementing a whole community approach to suicide prevention and awareness. It includes mental health training, support and resources for OPP and Wellington County employees, and the community.

“The rate of suicide in Wellington County is 2.5 times higher than the provincial average,” commented Helen Fishburn, Executive Director of CMHA WW. “Promoting life and preventing suicide requires a whole community approach and this partnership recognizes that this important work requires expertise, leadership and coordination. We are proud and privileged to be doing this important work with the County of Wellington and Wellington OPP.”

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**Information sheet:**

The County's investment in the partnership with CMHA WW is \$295,000 over three years. The *“Here4Hope” Wellington Framework for Promoting Life and Preventing Suicide* will focus on:

1. **Operationalizing the framework:** The components of the framework have been identified in phase one of the project. Work on Phase two involves operationalizing the work, evaluating efforts and continuous communication to stakeholders on progress. An annual “Here4Hope” community event will be held each year in Wellington County.
2. **IMPACT: Suicide Prevention/Postvention Programme:** The Wellington OPP and CMHA WW have recently collaborated in a submission to the Community Safety and Police Grant programme. This proposed programme involves community mental health/suicide awareness education, crisis intervention training for officers and the development of a postvention team. The postvention team will respond to and support those impacted in the aftermath of suicide. This innovative programme will be the first of its kind in Ontario and offer support and hope to those profoundly affected by suicide in our community. This piece will bring much needed resources (“feet on the ground”) to provide additional help and support for many people in our community.
3. **The County of Wellington Employee Wellness Strategy:** The County has identified employee wellness, and in particular, mental health, life promotion and suicide prevention, as a priority. A workplace strategy will be developed, operationalized and resourced with input from every level of the organization. This strategy includes offering monthly SafeTALK training sessions and bi-annual ASIST training sessions for County of Wellington employees. Cecilia Marie will work with the key leaders within the County of Wellington who will be responsible for operationalizing this strategy. The intent is that this strategy could be shared, adopted and replicated by member municipalities and other employers in the community.
4. **The Mental Health Commission Roots of Hope Demonstration Project:** CMHA WW and several service providers in Wellington County, along with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council have collectively joined the Roots of Hope programme. This is a national 5-year project supporting and evaluating whole community approaches to suicide prevention with the goal of adding to the base of knowledge around best practices in suicide prevention.