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9:00 a.m., Wednesday January 5, 2022
Community Services & Parks Standing Committee

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Item 8.2 Rent Supplement Program Expiries and Mitigation Strategy - City Wide
- a) Ralph Ganter, Executive Director, Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario, submitting the ***attached*** letter dated December 23, 2021 as a written submission.

DELEGATIONS:

December 23, 2021

Windsor City Council

Community Services and Parks Standing Committee



Windsor City Council:

I am writing to express concern on behalf of the staff and consumers of Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario (ALSO) over agenda item 8.2 – Rent Supplement Program Expiries and Mitigation Strategy.

ALSO administers subsidies to approximately 80 households under the expiring Strong Communities Rent Supplement Programs 1&2. Recipients of these subsidies are people with Disabilities in receipt of Ministry of Health funded supports. Of these 80 households, 24 live in ALSO Supportive Housing units where they receive daily, specialized support. For many of these individuals the loss of these subsidies means relocation to Long Term Care, or hospital services.

Further, with loss of this funding, ALSO will lose a subsidy resource for our entire consumer base at a group home for men with acquired brain injuries, a group home for women with complex Disabilities, and a Supportive Housing site in Amherstburg for all genders with complex Disabilities. Such a significant loss holds the potential not only to impact our consumers, but our staff who rely on Disabled people living outside of institutions in order to maintain their employment.

As an organization, we are considering mitigation strategies pre-emptively (including the possibility of the provision of comparable subsidies should they be available), however, such subsidies are currently unavailable and/or were insufficient for community demand (even before the loss of the rent supplement subsidy programs). Hence, we cannot place our confidence in their availability at this time.

Further, Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario is a very unique organization; there is no comparable level of specialized support available in Windsor-Essex. If our Supportive Housing consumers are forced to relocate to mitigate the impacts of this loss, they will lose out on the specialized support that they require to remain living independently and will almost certainly require institutionalization. The effectiveness and flexibility of our program depends on consumer proximity to Supportive Housing sites, and if consumers cannot afford to live at the Supportive Housing site, they will fail to receive the effective, flexible care that they require.

For the remaining people on the program who are not living in Supportive Housing sites but still require support for daily living, they will be at significantly increased risk of homelessness and/or institutionalization as the shelter system in Windsor Essex is not equipped for people with Disabilities, and many personal support providers will not provide care within our shelter system.

Finally, an internal analysis of rental units available in Windsor-Essex was undertaken in 2020, with results showing that throughout September-April 2020, there were zero fully accessible units

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available on the private market, and only 45% of available units had a barrier free entrance. Of those 45% of units, under 20% met the affordability criteria for our subsidy programs, meaning they will most certainly be out of reach for those without subsidy assistance. The only affordable relocation options for our clients will be RGI housing, or rooms for rent which are typically very inaccessible.

In conclusion, the loss of these subsidies would create a true crisis for the Disabled community of Windsor-Essex and the staff who work tirelessly to support them. This, when our community is already struggling to adapt and thrive through the current COVID-19 Pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of our position and we would be happy to provide any information that you require in order help provide greater detail of our organization's experiences as well as to better quantify the impact.

We look forward to your response on this matter and, as always, we offer to work together with you to create an equitable solution in advance of March 31, 2023.

Sincerely,

Ralph Ganter, Executive Director
Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario