

Date: June 19, 2008

Report to: Board of Directors
CityHousing Hamilton Corporation

Submitted by: Chris Murray,
Chief Executive Officer/
Secretary

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Manager of Tenant
Support Services

Subject: **Bed Bug Issues Within CHH (Report #08018)**

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report #8018 be received as information.

Chris Murray, MCIP, RPP
Chief Executive Officer/Secretary

BACKGROUND:

In the last decade there has been a significant increase in bedbug infestations throughout the world. Bed bugs are an issue in five star hotels privately owned homes and apartments as well as in social housing. Bed bugs were first identified as an issue within CHH in 2004. It has been a struggle for staff to maintain control over the bed bugs, with varying degrees of success, since that time. CHH has more than doubled our costs for treatment in the last year. Additional contractors have been added to our certified contractors list to ensure a faster response to treatment requests.

Bed bugs are an issue that impacts on tenant satisfaction within their home, can exacerbate mental health conditions, cause financial pressures and impact on resident quality of life. In addition, some community health service providers have withdrawn client care when bed bug issues are identified.

DISCUSSION:

Bed bugs have resulted in increased costs and staff time spent on issuing work orders and resident notices as well as tracking the treatment. CHH has tried various treatments, increased the number of pest control companies, moved to “blocking” units for treatment rather than individual units being treated, experimented with preventive treatment and full preparation and follow up treatment and reinspections.

Bed bugs have become an increasing part of the staffs’ day to day work. It involves Property Managers, Property Management Assistants, Community Relations Workers and other support and maintenance staff on a daily basis. Many tenants are unable to prepare adequately for the pest control treatments due to their mental or physical health. Lack of preparation means that the unit cannot be treated as effectively as it could be.

Staff has reviewed a variety of research documents, met with pest control companies and Public Health Services. We have also read reports on bed bugs prepared by other large social housing providers in Canada and the USA. No one, to our knowledge, has resolved a definitive approach that has eradicated bed bugs. Most suggest that there has been a resurgence of bed bugs since Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane (DDT) was banned in the late 1970’s.

CHH staff together with representatives from Good Shepherd and Kiwanis are scheduled to tour a Toronto Shelter for Homeless men to learn about their “Bug & Scrub” program which is a Social Enterprise venture which prepares units for bed bug treatment. In addition, the partners are exploring a joint venture with the goal of establishing a collaborative funding proposal for a pilot project involving a community integrated pest management approach.

It is the goal of staff to develop a CHH Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that would deal with all aspects of pest control including; a comprehensive resident education program, strategies for assistance with unit preparation, service of 24 hour notices for treatment, tracking and scheduling pest control services. Staff are investigating contracting services from HSI Construction and Maintenance Solutions for pest management services. HSI provides an IPM chain of accountability program with a holistic, environmentally-healthy, proactive approach that results in a sustainable process focusing on:

- reducing the number of pest control services and pesticide use
- demonstrating due diligence in addressing pest control issues
- education, training and communication for stakeholders
- knowledge to take proactive and preventive measures
- consistent protocols for pest control contractors

- consistent preparation forms in multiple languages
- full cycle treatment request and dispatch service
- analysis of treatment outcomes for better informed decision making
- increasing levels of building occupant satisfaction and improved quality of life

Services would be purchased from HSI Solutions on a pilot basis for a specific grouping of multi-residential buildings and services evaluated over a period of time.

CONCLUSION:

Managing bed bugs requires a multi-faceted approach that includes education, preparation, laundering of personal belongings and insecticidal treatment. Tenant education and awareness sessions will be implemented throughout CHH so that there is greater awareness and understanding of bed bugs, the importance of the preparation to control the spread of bed bugs and pest control treatments. CHH will determine and secure appropriate resources to prepare units for treatment for our elderly and disabled residents. If the pilot project is deemed successful, CHH staff will purchase pest management services as needed and develop/implement an Integrated Pest Management Program.

2006 OPERATIONAL PLAN:

This report implements:

Goal 2. Maintain and Improve Building Conditions - *Ensure that the CityHousing Hamilton portfolio is managed effectively and sensitively and is in a good state of repair to meet the affordable housing requirements of Hamilton residents now and in the future.*

Goal 3. Create Healthy, Secure Communities - *Ensure that Hamilton residents have access to affordable housing opportunities and support initiatives that will enhance quality-of-life, increase client empowerment and decrease dependency.*

Goal 5. Leadership: Influence and adapt Social Housing Reform - *Advocate to the community, City Council, the Provincial Government and the Federal Government on policy, program and legislative solutions to affordable housing issues in Hamilton and issues affecting CityHousing Hamilton and other social housing providers in Hamilton.*

CM/ma