



Financially Assisted Social Prescribing (FASP) Quarterly Update

In this issue:

Page 1.....[What is FASP?](#)

Page 2.....[Community Spotlight](#)

Page 3.....[Gaps Analysis for Hamilton, ON](#)

March 2025

Year 1, Issue 2

What is FASP?

The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) has been collaborating with the [Greater Hamilton Health Network](#) to develop Financially Assisted Social Prescribing (FASP), an innovative approach to bring social prescribing to community organizations providing support to citizens residing in Municipal wards 2, 3, and 4 in Hamilton, Ontario. The goal of the initiative is to increase health equity and informed care and services in the Hamilton region by bringing the health and social sectors together. On September 16, 2024, the FASP initiative was officially launched accompanied by a community engagement campaign in Hamilton's downtown wards 2, 3, and 4.

Our Work in Numbers

58

Connections made
among Collective
members

12

Advisory Committee
members

250+

Over 250 hours
of Volunteering

200+

Total hours of community
meetings & consultation

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee, is dedicated to examining gaps and opportunities, is comprised of community leaders from various fields who bring diverse perspectives to the table. Recently, they welcomed three new members. Their expertise and fresh insights are expected to significantly contribute to the committee's mission. At this time, the committee is still actively seeking Indigenous leadership to ensure a more inclusive and representative approach to addressing the community's needs.

Social Prescribing Service Community Coordination Collective

The Social Prescribing Service Community Coordination Collective, also known as "the Collective" is a growing network of 29 diverse organizations united in their dedication to social prescribing in Hamilton. Facilitated by CRC, the Collective aims to improve service coordination between healthcare and social services. Despite varying in size and capacity, the member organizations work collaboratively on critical aspects such as Link Workers, community asset mapping, evaluation, and navigating Financial Assistance. Their coordinated efforts ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing social needs within the community. In the first three months, Collective members made 58 new connections, fostering partnerships, program development, and expanding referral networks.



January 2025 Social Prescribing
Community Coordination Collective Meeting
at The Gasworks Hub for Arts, Education,
and Community

Financial Assistance Working Group

The Financial Assistance Working Group has been working towards establishing fair and effective criteria for the CRC Community Health Fund open to Collective members. In their preliminary meetings, these front-line workers, policy experts, and individuals with lived experience collaborated to determine inclusion and exclusion criteria. Their discussions have also centered on making the application process as low barrier as possible while maintaining the legitimacy and integrity of the program. By streamlining the process, they aim to provide accessible Financial Assistance to eligible clients, thereby enhancing the impact of this funding within the community.

Volunteers

Our team of volunteers, known as the Social Prescribing Community Liaisons, are engaging in various critical tasks to support our mission. Some volunteers are focused on researching evaluation indicators to help inform and develop the evaluation framework used to assess the effectiveness of FASP, while others are compiling and updating both the Service Inventories for social prescribing services as well as Financial Assistance services within wards 2-4. Additionally, in the coming weeks, a group of volunteers will be assisting Collective members in applying for the Community Health Fund, ensuring they have the support needed to navigate the application process. Due to the overwhelming response and commitment of our current volunteers, our roster is now full with over 20 volunteers.

Community Spotlight



In a disconnected ecosystem of services provided in Hamilton, the Social Prescribing Community Service Collective has been helping to facilitate collaboration by connecting healthcare, social services, and community organizations. Since its inception, 58 connections have been made amongst its members resulting in multiple referrals to new and existing services for their clients. We are thrilled to spotlight two organizations who regularly participate in the Collective and the first formal organizational partnership developed through the Collective so far.



Luso Canadian Charitable Society in Hamilton, provides safe and supportive day programs for adults with physical and developmental disabilities, including community integration activities that promote awareness and inclusion.



Luso program participants volunteering at the HBSPCA. Photos are courtesy of Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

Hamilton Burlington SPCA (HBSPCA), in addition to animal adoption, provides low or no cost programs for pet health and wellness, food programs for those in need including a Pet Food Pantry, and other community programs such as Transportation services, Spay and Neuter programs and access to Veterinary services.

On Thursday, February 27, participants from Luso volunteered at the HBSPCA pet-focused thrift store. They spent the morning preparing items for sale—packing, folding, and sealing—while enjoying the company of cats and dogs awaiting adoption.

The partnership between Luso and the HBSPCA highlights the collaboration possibilities as a result of joining the Collective, and how it can improve service access. These organizations were able to leverage their unique strengths and resources to address the needs of the community more effectively. We look forward to seeing how their social prescribing programs continue to develop!

Gaps Analysis for Hamilton, ON

The Social Prescribing Service Inventory is a database of services, programs, and organizations offering social prescribing in Hamilton's Municipal wards 2, 3, and 4. Following the compilation of this information by FASP volunteers, members of the Collective and the Financial Assistance Working Group, two primary gaps within the Inventory were identified: limited services either due to services that do not exist or are experiencing high wait times, and underserved populations that are requesting these support services most often.

Limited Services

- Financial support for accessible needs
- Cleaning/laundry & home maintenance or improvement services
- Disordered eating support
- Bereavement support
- Gender affirming care
- Hoarding resources
- Social navigation
- Financial support for transportation
- Counseling
- Program & administrative funding for service providers
- Trauma Therapy
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Long-Term Case Management
- Youth Substance Supports
- Indigenous traditional healings & cultural programming

Underserved Populations

- Youth: youth in care, youth who use drugs
- Indigenous People
- Incarcerated individuals / legally involved persons
- Two-Spirit LGBTQ+ senior services
- Sex workers / former sex workers
- Asylum seekers
- Worker/student visa holders
- Precariously housed individuals
- Individuals experiencing generational poverty
- Marginalized / underprivileged populations
- People with disabilities / adults with disabilities
- Undocumented individuals
- Working poor
- Older people experiencing homelessness

Having identified gaps in services and priority populations, these insights have now been incorporated into the CRC Community Health Fund development process, by adopting a flexible and compassionate targeting framework that ensures equity in providing funding support to community organizations and identifying individuals for Financial Assistance. The identified needs and priorities are reflected in both the Fund application and eligibility criteria. The fund launches this March 2025 for Collective members.



November 2024, Collective Meeting at David Braley Health Sciences Centre



December 2024, Collective Meeting at Hamilton Convention Centre by Carmen's



January 2025, Collective Meeting at The Gasworks Hub for Arts, Education and Community

Get Involved

If you would like this newsletter translated to French or are interested in knowing how you can get involved by joining as Advisory Committee Member, Community Collective Member, Working Group Member, or Volunteer, please contact us:

E: Leah.Fuller@redcross.ca P: (905) 387-7586

redcross.com/fasp-hamilton