



Community and Health Services
Office of the Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: Members of Committee of the Whole

FROM: Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

DATE: May 7, 2015

RE: **York Region Health and Wellbeing – 2014 Year End Review**

I am pleased to provide *York Region Health and Wellbeing – Year End Review 2014*, which summarizes some key population, economic trends and indicators of social and health wellbeing observed in 2014 and their impacts on Community and Health Services (CHS) programs and services.

Although the Region's labour market trends have steadily improved since 2009, many York Region residents struggle with making ends meet and housing affordability. Growth in the population is reflected in the growing demands on CHS programs and services, particularly those that serve older adults and children. Across all CHS programs, as in the rest of Canada, mental health is emerging as a major health concern.

This report is intended to assist anyone involved in service planning or delivery to be aware of changes taking place in the Region. We are continuing to monitor these trends and their impacts on CHS programs and services through 2015, and will provide Council with an update in October 2015.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

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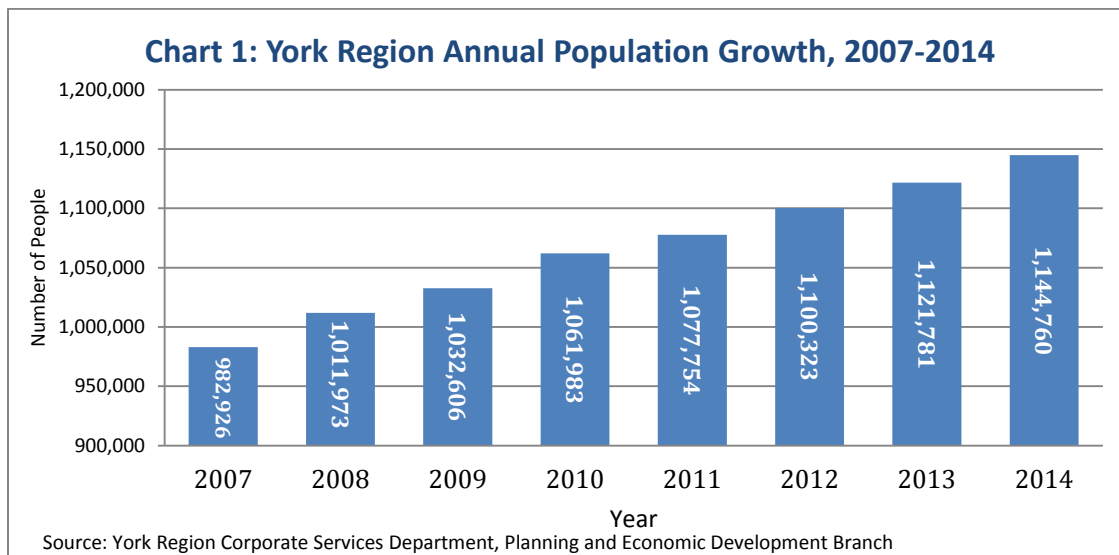
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York Region Health and Wellbeing – Year End Review 2014

The Community and Health Services (CHS) Department provides programs and services that touch York Region residents’ lives at every stage and address a wide range of needs. This report summarizes the key population, economic trends and indicators of social and health wellbeing observed in 2014 and their impacts on CHS programs and services.

York Region’s population grew by two percent in 2014

The Regional Municipality of York’s population continued to grow through 2014 and was estimated at 1,144,760 by December 2014, which was an increase of two percent (22,979 residents) from 2013 (see Chart 1). Each of the Region’s nine municipalities experienced population growth in 2014, with growth rates ranging from 0.8 percent in East Gwillimbury to 4.3 percent in King. York Region experienced population growth across all age groups, but the age groups for seniors aged 60 to 64, 80 to 84, and 85 and older experienced the greatest growth (Statistics Canada, 2011).



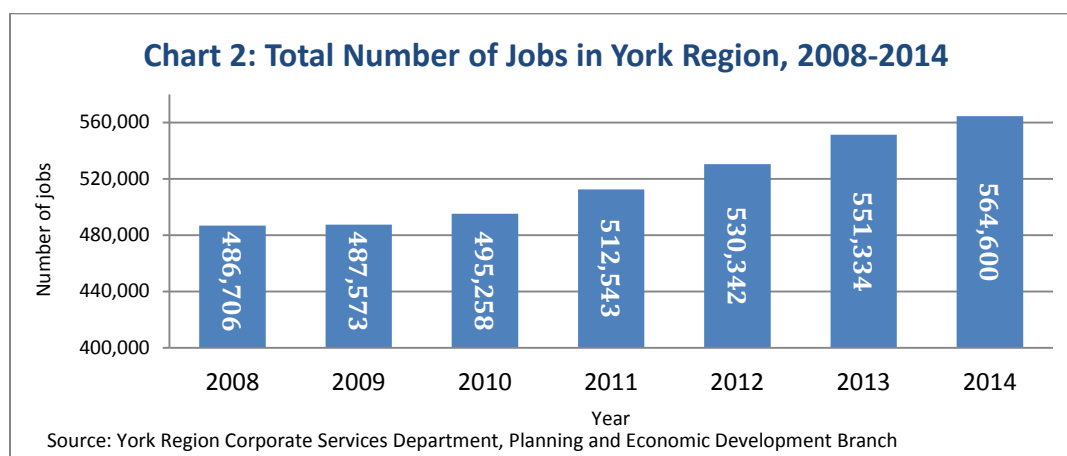
Population growth is contributing to a strong housing market

The Region's population growth has contributed to increasing demand on the Region's residential real estate market, with more than 17,000 residential sales concluded in 2014, an increase of six percent from 2013. The value of York Region residential sales was \$11.7 billion, up from \$10.0 billion in 2013. The overall average resale price for 2014 home sales in York Region was \$685,522, an increase of 10 percent from 2013. New housing starts in York Region declined marginally to 7,397 units in 2014, compared to 7,501 units in 2013.

The Region's positive labour markets trends continued in 2014

The overall number of jobs in York Region has increased steadily since 2008

York Region employers continued their positive record of job creation in recent years. According to the *York Region Employment Survey*, there were approximately 564,600 jobs in York Region in 2014, which was an increase of 13,300 jobs or 2.4 percent from the previous year (see Chart 2). York Region's solid job creation performance has resulted in close to 77,000 new jobs created since the end of recession in 2009 – a gain of almost 16 percent. In 2014, 73.5 percent of all jobs in the Region were full-time positions, 19 percent were part-time positions, and 7.5 percent of jobs were for seasonal or contract work.



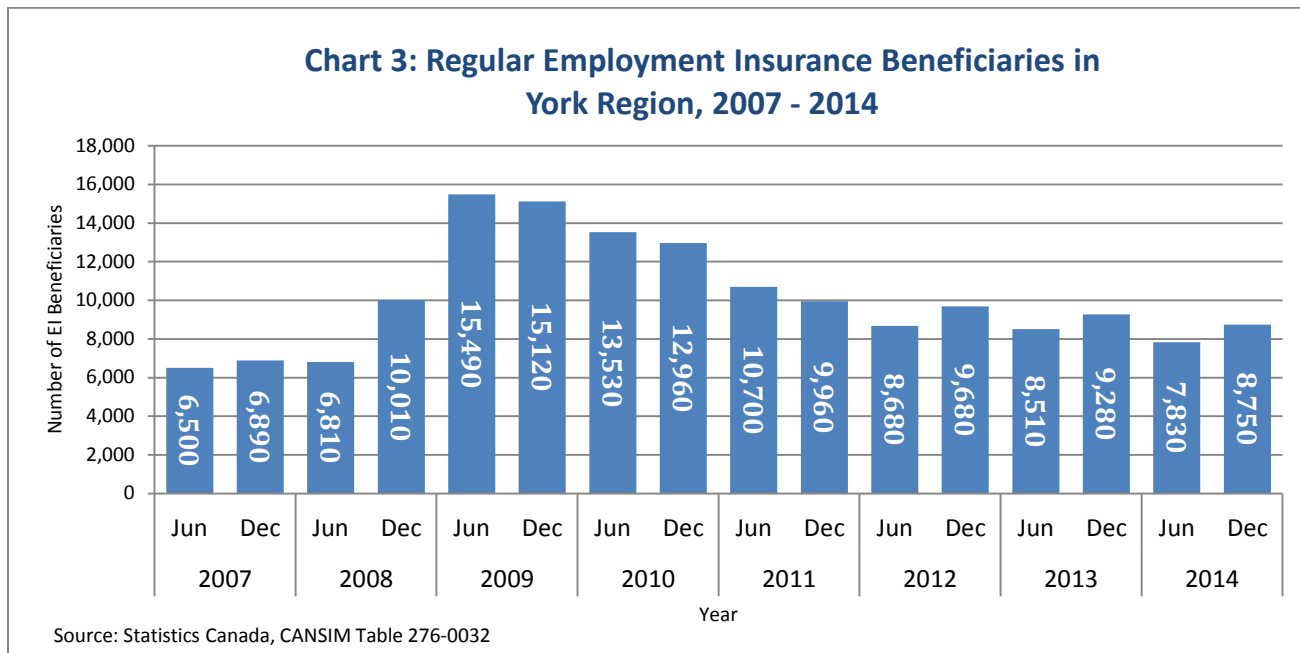
More York Region jobs were advertised in 2014, with the majority for full-time positions

York Region employers advertised 50,274 jobs between January and December 2014, representing a 19 percent increase (almost 8,000 postings) since 2013. Eighty-four percent of the job ads were for full time positions, a positive sign of a strengthening regional economy and a healthy local job market.



The number of Employment Insurance beneficiaries continued to decrease in 2014

By December 2014, there were 8,750 people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in York Region, which was a decrease of 530 people or six percent compared with December 2013 (see Chart 3). The decline brings the number of EI beneficiaries to a level approaching that observed before the start of the economic recession in 2008. A pattern is seen in Chart 3 for the years 2012 to 2014 where the number of EI beneficiaries is higher in December than in June. This may be due to the effect of seasonal employment, where seasonal workers who were working in June became unemployed during the fall and were accessing EI benefits by December.

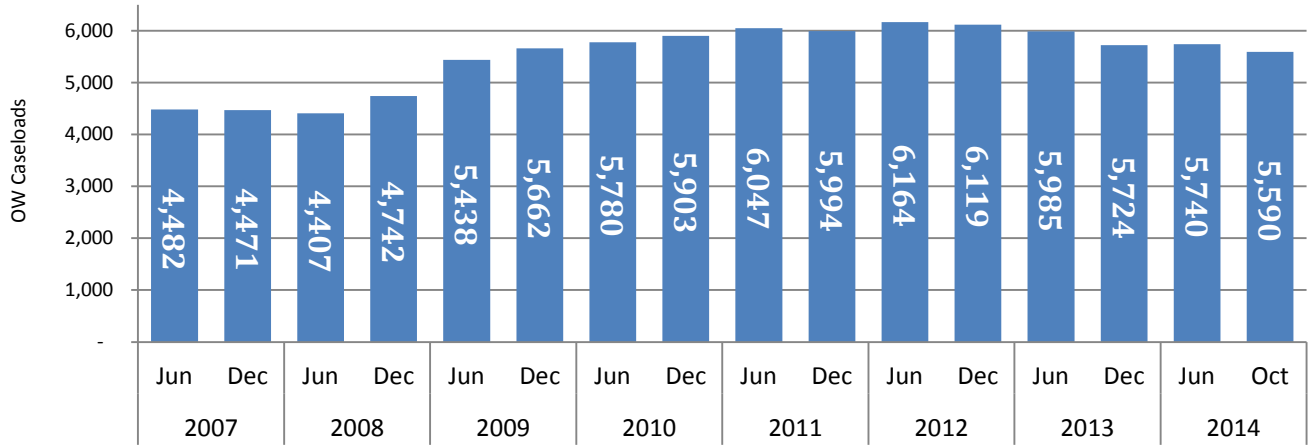


The Ontario Works caseload has steadily decreased since 2012

York Region's Ontario Works (OW) caseload began to increase soon after the global recession hit in 2008. The caseload peaked in June 2012 at 6,164 cases. Since then, the caseload has slowly edged down, reaching 5,590 by October of 2014 (see Chart 4). There was a decrease of 134 cases or 2.3 percent from December 2013 to October 2014. Due to the implementation of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) in November 2014, OW caseload data for November and December 2014 will not be available until the system is fully functional.



Chart 4: Ontario Works Caseload, 2007-2014



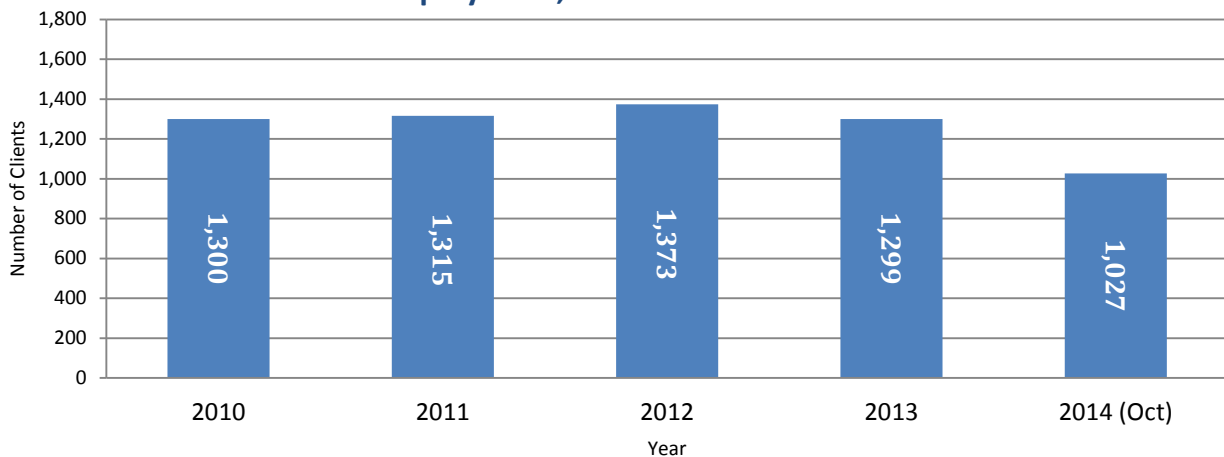
Note: Due to the implementation of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) in November 2014, OW caseload data for November and December 2014 will not be available until the system is fully functional.

Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Social Services Branch, Benefit Unit Summary Report for SDMT

Ontario Works employment programs support clients in exiting social assistance

Approximately 1,263 Ontario Works (OW) clients (on average) have left social assistance each year since 2010. Between January and October 2014, 1,027 OW participants left social assistance for employment-related reasons and no longer required financial assistance (see Chart 5).

Chart 5: Number of OW Clients Exiting Social Assistance for Employment, 2010 to 2014



Note: Due to the implementation of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) in November 2014, OW caseload data for November and December 2014 will not be available until the system is fully functional.

Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Social Services Branch, SDMT and 2014 SAMS

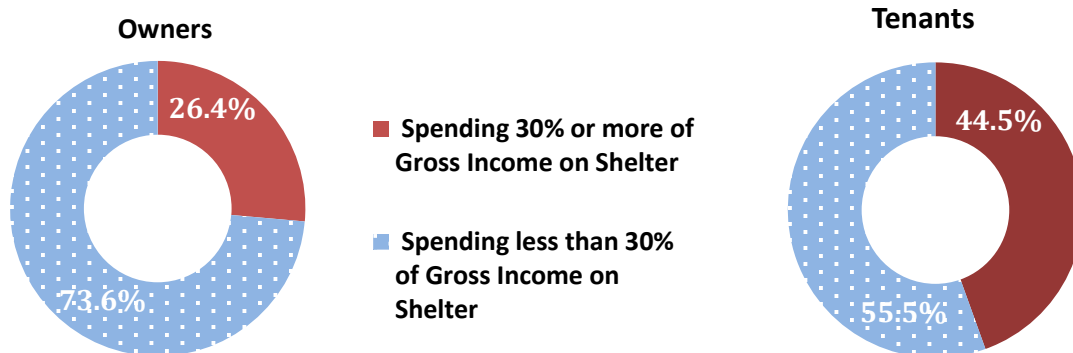


Despite positive economic and employment trends, housing affordability in York Region remains a key community issue

In June 2014, York Region participated in the first Ontario Municipal Social Services Benchmark Poll (commissioned by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association). Thirty percent of York Region participants identified affordable housing as the most serious community issue, followed by youth unemployment (27 percent) and people living in poverty (20 percent).

The result that affordable housing was identified as the most serious community issue was not surprising. Over the past decade, the Region's housing prices have soared by 90.5 percent, while incomes increased by only 21.4 percent. The 2011 National Household Survey indicated that 26.4 percent of York Region homeowners (the highest proportion in Ontario and fifth highest in Canada) and 44.5 percent of the Region's renters (the highest proportion in the GTA) spend 30 percent or more of their household income on housing. This exceeded the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's "affordability threshold" which is 30 percent of before tax household income (see Chart 6).

Chart 6: Housing Costs as percent of Gross Income in York Region



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 NHS

High mortgage debt is putting low and moderate income households at financial risk

Many York Region homeowners have benefited from a continued drop in mortgage rates, but their wealth has become increasingly tied up in their homes. In 2014, real estate accounted for over 67 percent of total household assets. Many households across York Region carry a high debt burden to keep their homes. In 2014, the average household in York Region had \$348,307 in mortgage debt, the highest average mortgage debt in the GTA. Rising debt loads have put many York Region households in financially vulnerable positions; if interest rates jump or another economic downturn occurs resulting in job losses, it will become difficult for many to carry such high debt and make ends meet.



Affordable rental housing remains difficult to find in York Region

The rental housing market in York Region is falling short in meeting the needs of people who often rent housing, such as younger residents, lower income families, seniors and people new to Canada. This is due to low vacancy rates, high rents, and few new rental units being built.

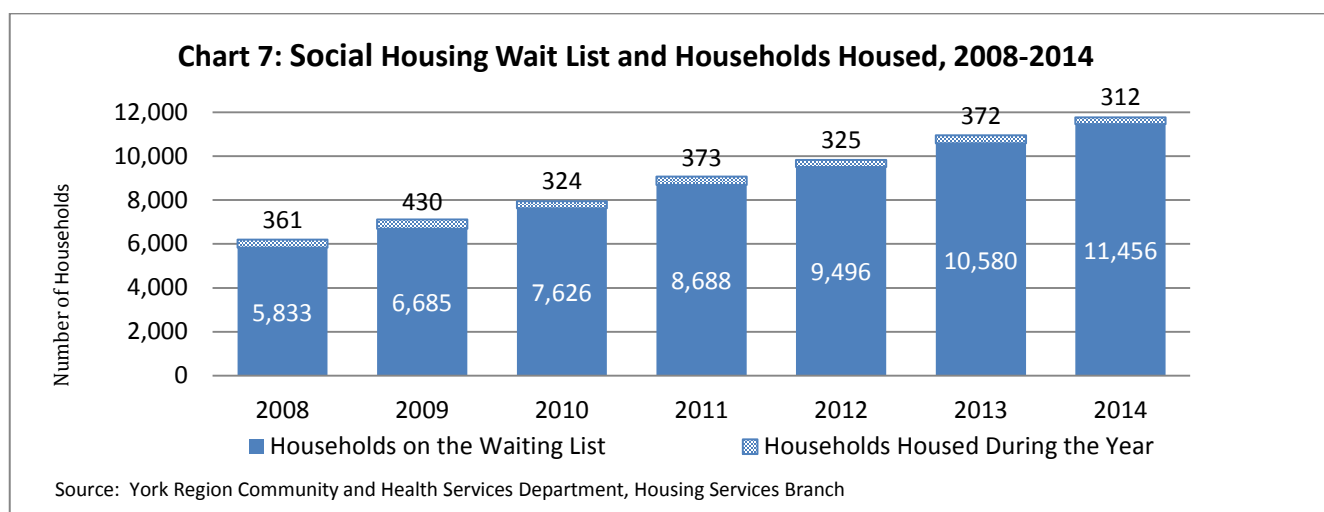
- The average apartment vacancy rate in York Region’s purpose-built rental apartment market is the lowest in the GTA, at 1.5 percent. The vacancy rate in York Region was the lowest for large apartment types (three bedroom or more) at 0.5 percent.
- Rents in York Region continue to increase annually for units regardless of the number of bedrooms. By the end of 2014, the average monthly rent for all unit types in York Region rose to \$1,127 from \$1,106 in 2013, an increase of more than 2.5 percent.
- In 2014, out of a total 7,397 housing starts in York Region, only 241 units were intended for the rental market. Of those, 202 units were started by Housing York Inc., at the Richmond Hill Housing and Community Hub. The other 39 units were in the private rental market.

The lack of available rental units has led some York Region families to turn to the more expensive rental condominium market. As a result, the vacancy rate for this type of housing has dropped to 2.1 percent in 2014 from 2.7 percent in the previous year. The average monthly rent for all condominium apartment unit types was \$1,564 in 2014.

CHS housing and homelessness prevention supports are in high demand

The demand for the Region’s social housing units is increasing

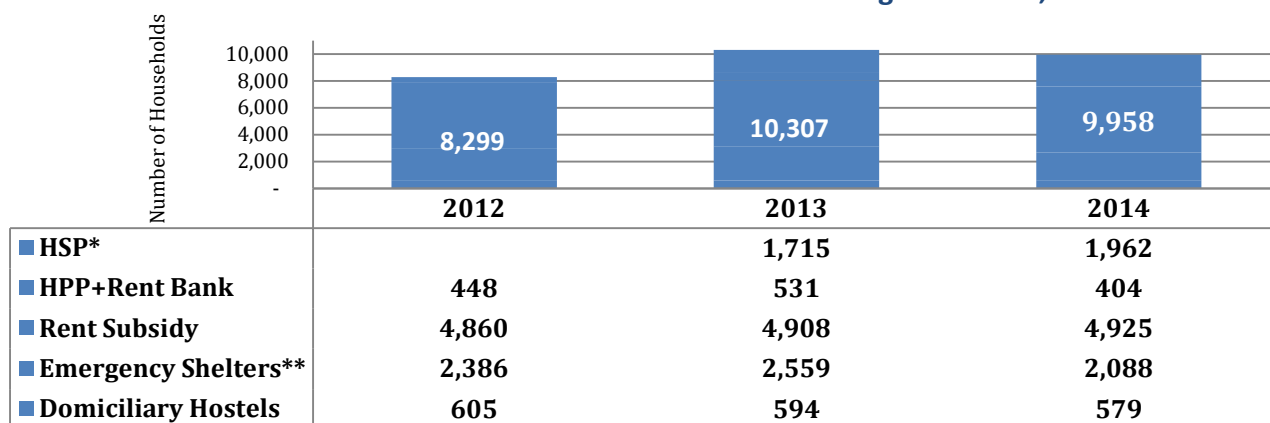
The low supply of affordable rental units and rising rental costs are contributing to an increased demand for the Region’s social housing units. In 2014, York Region was able to house 312 new households, but 11,456 households were on the waitlist (see Chart 7).



York Region’s housing stability programs serve thousands of residents each year

Once housing is lost in York Region, it is difficult to find new housing. In recognition of this, York Region’s CHS Department delivers a range of prevention programs and services for individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, including: the Rent-Geared-to-Income Assistance for Market Rent Households, Eviction Prevention Assistance, Shelter Rent Assistance, Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) and Housing Stability Program (HSP). In 2014, the Region subsidized 9,958 at-risk households overall through these programs (see Chart 8). These programs keep residents from becoming homeless and help residents who do become homeless get rehoused.

Chart 8: Number of Households that Received Housing Assistance, 2012-2014



* The Housing Stability Program (HSP) was introduced in 2013. Due to implementation of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) in November 2014, data for the HSP program will not be available for November and December 2014 until system is fully functional.

** Due to service interruptions, no new clients were accepted at two emergency housing sites in the spring 2014 for 3 months and 1 month respectively.

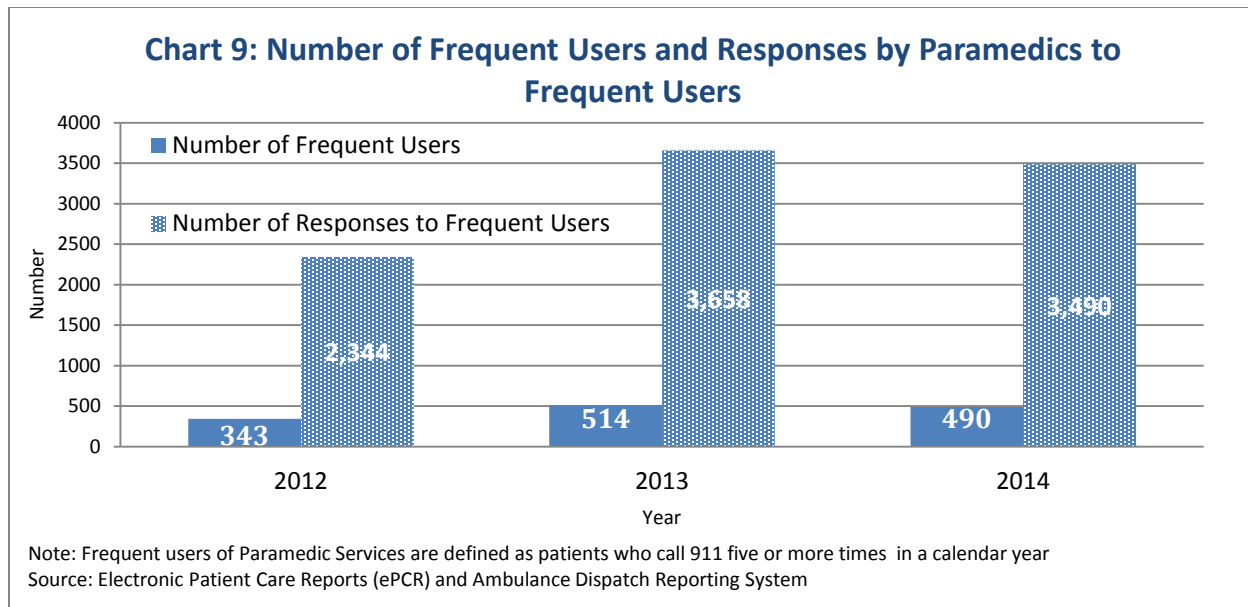
Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Social Services, Housing Services, and Strategies and Partnerships Branches

Paramedic Services is experiencing increasing demands

York Region Paramedic Services provides emergency and non-emergency ambulance services for York Region residents, transporting about five percent of the Region’s population annually. As the Region’s population increases, so does the number of transports provided by York Region’s paramedics. The demand for services is expected to increase by 48 percent by 2021.

Some of the increase is driven by a small group of frequent users; there are currently about 500 individuals in York Region who call on Paramedic Services more than five times in a calendar year (see Chart 9) and some as many as 300 times per year. Age, housing status, mental illness, and social isolation could be contributing factors to frequent use. Paramedicine programs have been put in place to better meet the needs of frequent callers in order to mitigate the impact on response times and reduce costs and the pressure on Paramedic Services.





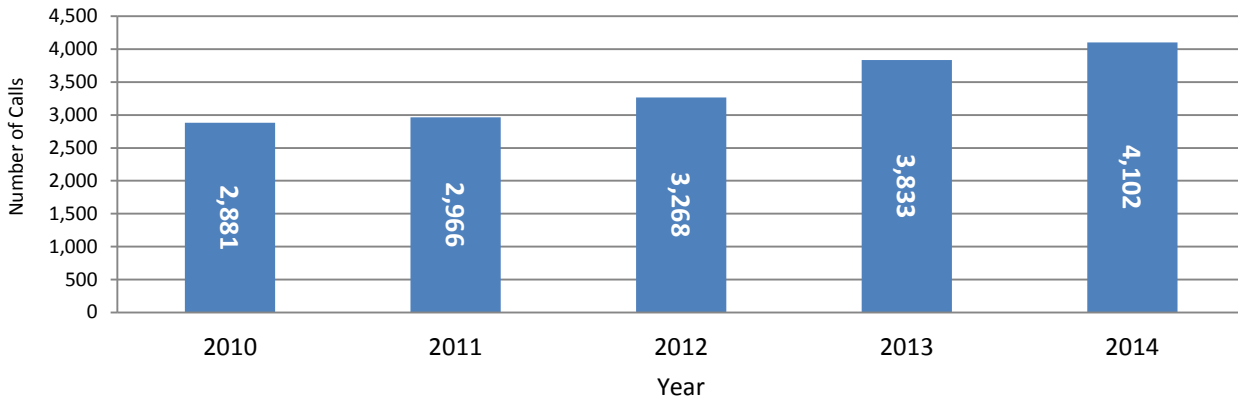
Individuals are often accessing Paramedic Services for mental health issues

Mental illness is emerging as a major health concern not only in York Region but throughout Canada. An increasing trend has been seen over the last four years in York Region where individuals are accessing emergency resources for mental health reasons. Between 2010 and 2014, the number of mental health calls to York Region’s Paramedic Services increased by 42 percent (see Chart 10), disproportionate to the Region’s population growth of eight percent during the same time period.

CHS is working collaboratively across its branches with York Regional Police and other service providers to develop a mental illness approach that has three areas of focus: resilience and prevention, ongoing support for complex cases, and crisis intervention.



Chart 10: Mental Health Calls to Paramedic Services, 2010-2014



Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Paramedic and Seniors Services Branch

Paramedic Services exceeded response time targets in 2014

Paramedic response times are an indicator of service delivery level to the community. Emergencies are categorized from one to five on the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS), with CTAS 1 being the most severe and CTAS 5 being non-urgent. Response time targets are set by Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for sudden cardiac arrests and for CTAS 1, and by York Region for the remaining CTAS categories. In 2014, York Region’s Paramedic Services surpassed the response time targets as shown in Chart 11 below, providing a high level of service delivery.

Chart 11: Paramedic Services Response Time Performance, 2014

Category	Target Set By	Target Time (Minutes)*	Target (%) 2014	Performance (%) 2014
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	MOHLTC	Community Target - arrival of any person equipped with an AED within 6 minutes	60	67 **
CTAS 1	MOHLTC	8	75	76
CTAS 2	York Region	10	80	88
CTAS 3	York Region	15	90	97
CTAS 4	York Region	20	90	99
CTAS 5	York Region	25	90	100

* Arrival of paramedics from time of dispatch notification
 ** Based on partial data from local fire services
 Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Paramedic and Seniors Services Branch



CHS programs and services for older adults are experiencing the impacts of a growing seniors population

The rapid growth of the Region's population of older adults is impacting the demand on some CHS programs and services for seniors.

CHS Adult Day Programs are helping seniors to stay in their homes longer

In response to the expressed desire by older adults to remain living in their homes as long as possible, adult day programs have become an integral part of community-based health care services available for York Region's seniors.

In 2014, 195 individuals were served by the comprehensive adult day programs provided by York Region CHS, which offer supervised person-centred programming to assist clients in maintaining their maximum level of functioning, prevent premature and inappropriate institutionalization and provide respite for the caregivers.

Approximately 78 per cent of individuals served were seniors over 65 years of age with multiple complex health needs (Cognitively Impaired, Advanced Cognitively Impaired, Acquired Brain Injury and Aphasic), who were unable to participate in existing social/recreational community programs due to their personal care and assistance needs.

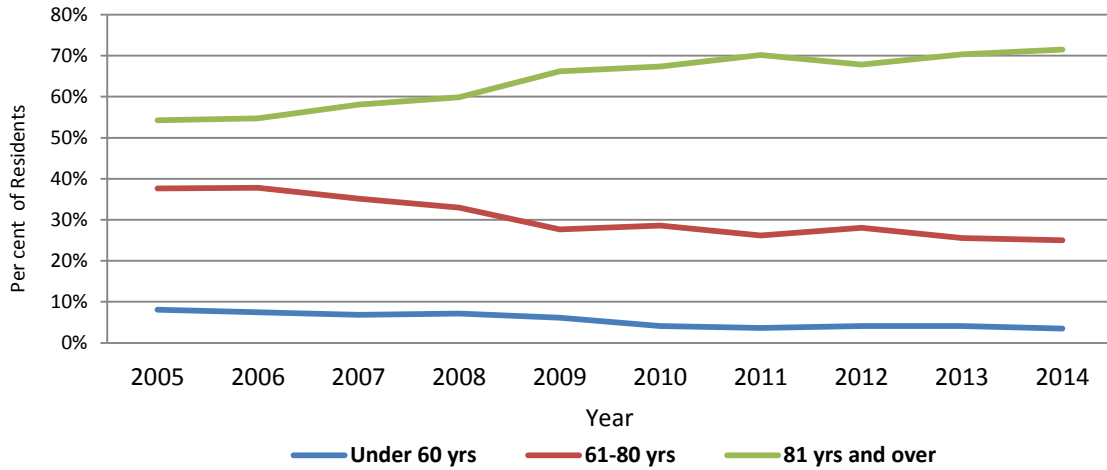
The demand for these community-based services suggests that adult day programs are important for both the clients attending the programs, as well as their family members.

The proportion of the Region's Long Term Care clients who are 81 years of age or older is increasing

More than 200 older adults lived in Newmarket Health Centre and Maple Health Centre in 2014, with 71 percent being 81 years of age or older. Since 2005, both Centres have seen an increase of 35 percent in the number of clients aged 81 years and over and a decline in the number of clients less than 81 years of age (see Chart 12).



Chart 12: Trends for Residents of Newmarket and Maple Health Centres, 2005-2014

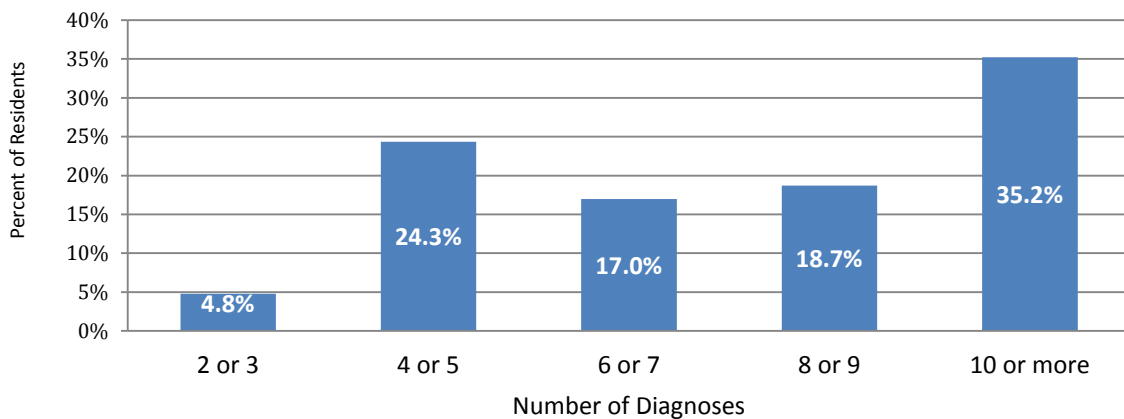


Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Paramedic and Seniors Services Branch

Clients living in the Region’s Long Term Care Homes have increasingly complex needs

The majority of clients living in the Newmarket and Maple Health Centres have increasingly complex physical, emotional and social needs that require significantly more time and resources to address. For example, clients with four or more reported diagnoses accounted for 95 percent of the total number of residents at the long-term care homes. Thirty-five per cent of clients had ten or more diagnoses (see Chart 13). The top three primary medical diagnoses of Newmarket and Maple Health Centre clients in 2014 were: dementia, Alzheimer’s disease and benign hypertension.

Chart 13: Long Term Care Residents Presenting with Multiple Diagnoses, 2014



Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, Paramedic and Seniors Services



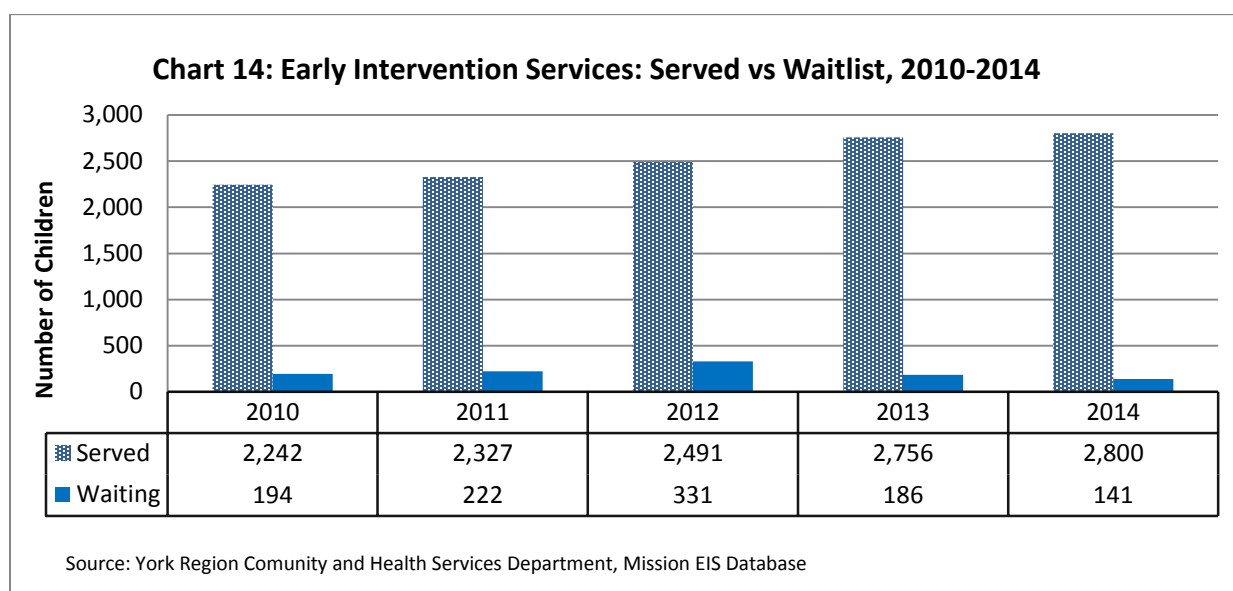
Demand for CHS programs and services for children continues to grow

York Region continues to be one of the few communities in Canada where the children’s population is also increasing each year. This has advantages and also means continuing high service demands on CHS programs and services for infants, toddlers, children and teens.

Early Intervention Services is helping increasing numbers of children each year

Early Intervention Services (EIS) delivers programs to support children with special needs and their families. These early identification and intervention programs are offered free of charge to all families for children from birth to school entry age who have special needs or who are at risk due to developmental delays, disabilities, an established diagnosis or biological factors such as prematurity.

The number of children receiving EIS increased slightly from 2,756 in December 2013 to 2,800 by December 2014. During the same period, the number of children on the waitlist decreased from 186 to 141, due to increased provincial funding for early diagnosis and intervention services and York Region Council’s approval of strategies to support this (see Chart 14).



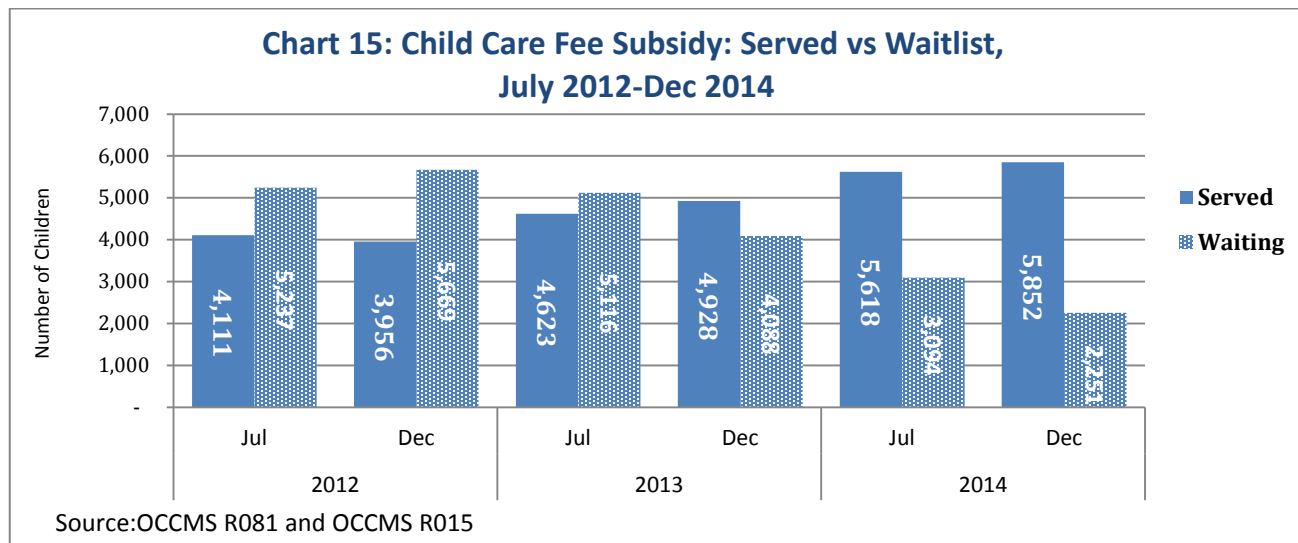
The number of children receiving child care fee subsidies increased in 2014

Subsidized child care plays an important role in the ability of low and moderate income residents to participate in employment, training and developmental opportunities. The number of licensed spaces is driven primarily by increasing demand, demographics and changing socio-economic factors; currently, there are almost 44,000 licensed child care spaces in operation in York Region.



The growing number of York Region families living on low and moderate incomes has contributed to an increased demand for subsidized child care. In December 2014, the monthly average number of children who received a child care fee subsidy was 5,852, up from 4,928 in December 2013 (see Chart 15).

Historically, the Region’s waitlist growth for child care fee subsidies was on average 1.8 percent monthly. Since 2013, the Region has been able to reduce the gap between service levels and waitlist levels primarily due to new provincial funding. By the end of 2014, there were 2,251 children on the waitlist, down from 4,088 children in December 2013 (see Chart 15).



Public Health Dental Programs serve thousands of children each year

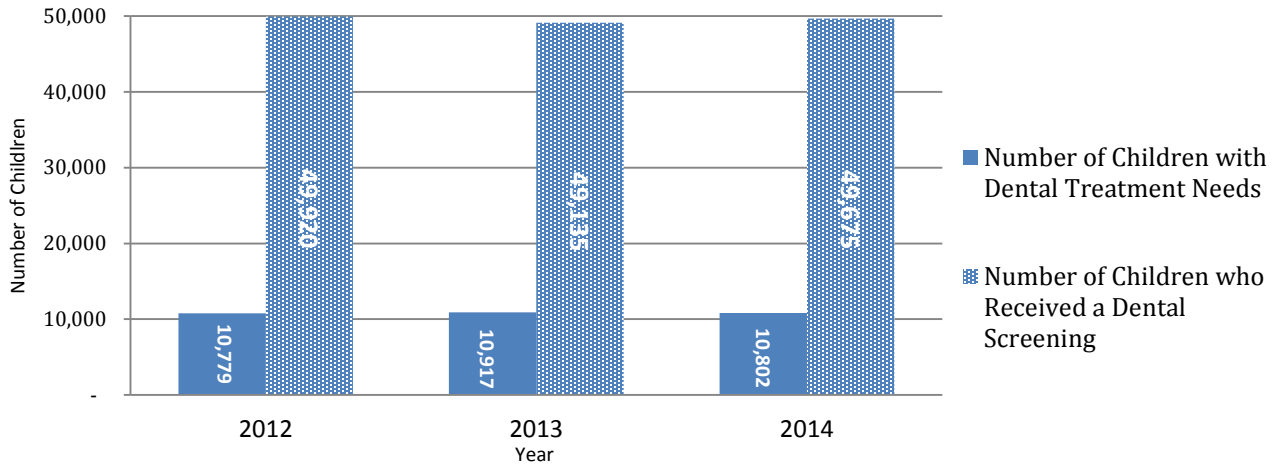
Good oral health is important to children's overall health. Yet, for some, regular dental care may not be affordable. Following the Ontario Public Health Standards, the York Region Public Health Dental Program monitors the oral health status of the Region’s children and provides preventive services and oral health screening in a number of settings including elementary schools, Public Health dental clinics and community venues such as Ontario Early Years Centres.

Eligible children with dental needs are provided preventive services, such as cleanings, fissure sealants and fluoride treatment in Public Health dental clinics or referred to programs such as Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) and Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO).

In 2014, York Region Public Health screened almost 50,000 children and identified more than 10,800 children with dental treatment needs (see Chart 16) through screenings provided at 271 elementary schools and four Public Health dental clinics. Preventive services were provided to 1,314 children at York Region offices in Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan.



Chart 16: York Region Public Health Children Dental Program, 2012-2014



Source: Community and Health Services Department, OHISS Database

Public Health school-based immunization clinics ensure students have easy access to vaccines

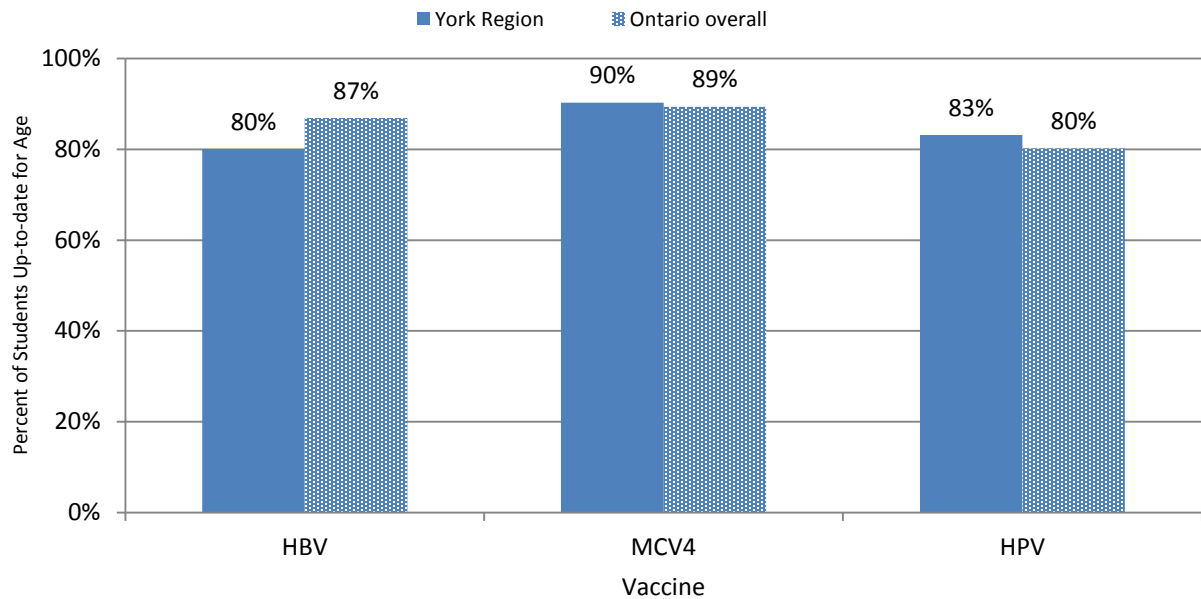
Vaccines are a safe and effective way of preventing disease. Hepatitis B vaccine (HBV), Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine are provided in schools by Public Health as a part of the provincially funded immunization program. HBV and MCV4 are given to Grade 7 students, and HPV vaccine is given to Grade 8 female students.

Children are considered "complete for age" for these vaccinations if they have received two doses of HBV, one dose of MCV4, and three doses of HPV vaccine. Prior to July 1, 2014, these three vaccines were voluntary, meaning that the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) did not require students to receive these vaccines in order to attend school. On July 1, 2014, the ISPA legislation was amended and proof of MCV4 immunization is now required for school attendance.

Chart 17 compares York Region rates against provincial rates of grade 7 and 8 students who were complete for age with these three publicly funded vaccines in the 2012/13 school year. While the York Region immunization rate for HBV was lower than the provincial average, the Region's rates for MCV4 and HPV were higher than the provincial average.



Chart 17: School-based immunization coverage among grade 7 and 8 students in York Region compared to the provincial average, 2012/13 school year



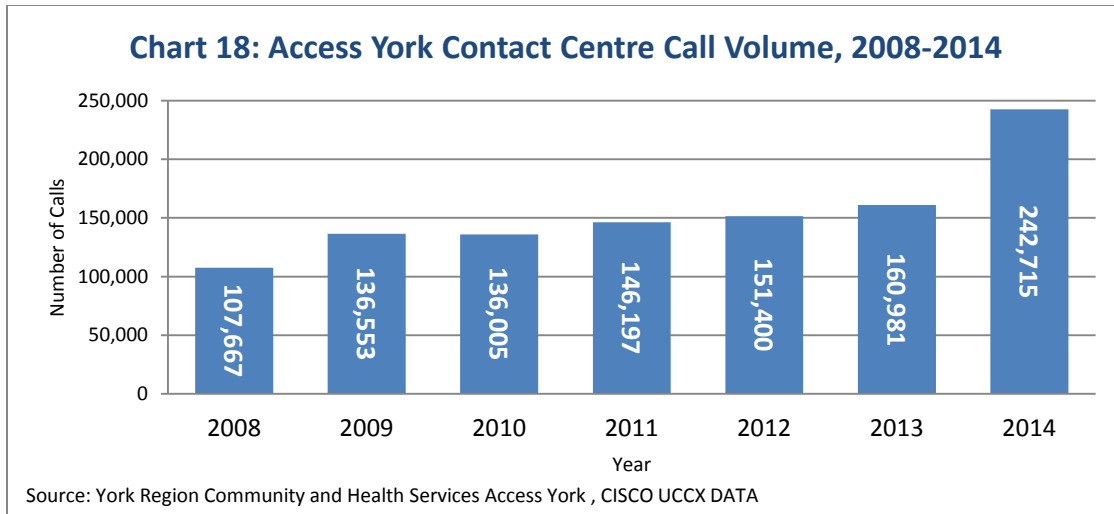
Other CHS programs are also experiencing increased demand

With population growth, more people rely on York Region CHS for information as well as for programs and services. CHS operates the Access York Contact Centre as a first point of contact for callers to the Region, and their call volume data provides an example of how overall numbers of requests for information and access to programs and services increase each year.

The calls handled by Access York Contact Centre increased by 51 percent in 2014

The Access York Contact Centre manages seventeen service queues and provides callers with integrated information, referrals, screening and application services. The total call volume handled by Access York increased from 160,981 in 2013 to 242,715 in 2014 (see Chart 18). This represents an increase of 51 percent and is largely due to the migration of main switchboard calls to Access York in April 2014. The majority of calls received were for CHS program and services.





Conclusion

The programs and services provided by CHS are accessed by more residents each year as the Region’s population grows and changes, as seen by the increases in services delivered by many CHS programs in 2014.

Our growing, diversifying and aging population is driving the demand for many programs, and we will need to continue to offer a range of service delivery methods that meet the needs of our residents. CHS will continue to take a proactive approach in monitoring the Region’s socio-demographic and economic trends, planning for the social, health and housing needs of our residents, and delivering programs and services to support wellbeing for all.

