



INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members Board of Health	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: September 26, 2011	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Low Income Dental Program - Healthy Smiles Ontario - Update BOH10002(b) (City Wide)	
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Council Direction:

This report is provided in follow up to the Board of Health reports BOH10002 and BOH10002(a) which outlined Public Health Services' application to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program.

Information:

As part of Ontario's poverty reduction strategy, \$45M per year has been committed to provide greater access to dental services for families with low incomes.

Phase I of this program included the expansion of the Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) program to include children 14-17 years of age, which took effect in January 2009.

Phase II of the strategy included the HSO program that is expanding services, starting with children and youth as the first priority. HSO is intended to support a proactive approach for the delivery of dental services. It is intended that children from families with low incomes will be able to access dental services at the onset of need, and also receive health education to increase oral health awareness and motivate behavioural changes to maintain oral health.

The HSO program in Hamilton includes four (4) components:

1. Increased capacity at 1447 Upper Ottawa clinic;
2. Fee for service budget to refer to private dental services;
3. Enhanced Screening Services for Children 0-4 years and Youth 14-17 years; and
4. Mobile Preventive Services.

1. Increased capacity at 1447 Upper Ottawa clinic

The dental clinic at 1447 Upper Ottawa is familiar with providing dental preventive and treatment services to families living with low incomes. The southeast Hamilton Mountain is home to high numbers of children and youth between 0-18 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census). The office is accessible by HSR bus.

The clinic will increase capacity to provide service to an additional 5,000 clients per year under HSO. Dental clinic renovations were completed March 31, 2011 through one-time HSO capital investment funding. The renovated clinic meets AODA requirements and infection control legislation. The funding provided the addition of a Panorex room for taking new kinds of x-rays and a larger client-friendly reception area.

Recruitment for new Clinical Dentists and Dental Assistants will be completed in Fall 2011, to provide oral treatment and preventive care. HSO treatment services will also be provided in the additional dental treatment suite on the new Community Health Bus expected in 2012.

2. Fees for Service (private dentists)

The Fees for Service component is similar to the existing CINOT process and was the simplest component to launch in September 2010. Clients are referred to private dentists in Hamilton for treatment and preventive care if they are eligible under the HSO program. From September 1, 2010 to July 31, 2011, 217 clients have enrolled in the program and have received treatment totaling \$71,077.

3. Enhanced Screening Services for Children 0-4 years and Youth 14-17 years

Dental staff currently screen elementary school children as a mandated program under the Ontario Public Health Standards. HSO funding increases capacity to screen children aged 0-4 years (at Ontario Early Years Centres, Child Care Centres and other community locations) and 14-17 years.

Evidence supports early screening as an effective means of preventing health problems in later life:

- Dental diseases are extremely prevalent. In fact dental caries is the most common chronic disease of childhood in Canada. (Wayne Halstrom, CMAJ, January 16, 2007; 176 (2).)
- In the general population approximately 31% of 5 year olds in Ontario have experienced dental decay (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care,

Dental Health Indices Surveys, 1972–1994 as cited in Peel Health Status Report, Children’s Dental Health, 2003)

The Community Dental Services team has increased the provision of dental screening in community locations including Ontario Early Years Centres, Arrell Youth Centre, Notre Dame House, Living Rock and City of Hamilton Libraries.

It is estimated that this approach would provide the capacity to screen for approximately 1,600 clients each year.

4. Mobile Treatment Services

Dental hygienists will provide dental services, including cleaning and preventive treatment, using 3 mobile dental units beginning September 2011. One dental unit will be housed at the East End Public Health Clinic site.

The remaining 2 dental units will be moved periodically to various locations, including community agencies and recreation centres, that meet the following criteria:

- Need – large number of clients with low incomes in need of dental services that regularly attend the facility, or live close-by and could comfortably access the facility;
- Physical site for service delivery available – has reasonable access for delivering/removing equipment and a means of securing equipment when not in use; and
- Proximity to other mobile prevention sites.

There is a cost to moving the portable equipment; it is not designed to be moved daily, but can be moved three to four times a year.

The Oral Health Information Surveillance System (OHISS) is administered by the province and is currently used to process and monitor CINOT claims, as well as register and process HSO client claims. Mobile applications are being added to this system which will streamline existing processes and enable direct data entry from community preventive and screening locations, as well as existing school screening sites.

Promotion of the Healthy Smiles Ontario program in Hamilton:

Dental Services is promoting the HSO program to increase program uptake. Enrolment for HSO services has slowly increased from 19 new clients in January 2011 to 70 new clients in July 2011. To date promotion has included distribution of MOHLTC pamphlets, postcards, and posters to:

- All schools within the City of Hamilton, including the French Catholic School Board and some private schools;
- Local dental assistant and dental hygiene associations;
- All recreation centres and municipal libraries;
- Children’s Aid Societies;
- Ontario Works;
- Physicians;

- Pharmacies;
- Community Centres; and
- Cultural groups.

Uptake of the program has been slow in Hamilton and across the province. In Hamilton, the current projection is a 50% budget surplus for 2011 within HSO, or \$750,000. In order to increase awareness, the MOHLTC recently issued a call for applications to re-allocate operational dollars to promote the program widely through various marketing strategies. This fall, PHS has proposed additional broader promotion of the program through:

- Media advertising;
- A bus advertisement campaign to launch in September 2011;
- A tax-buck insert to be delivered to households, including tenants, in November 2011; and
- Dental Hygienists to work with Women Health Educators to provide translated information to diverse cultural groups.

Some of these can be carried out within existing resources, and Public Health Services has submitted an application to MOHLTC for reallocation of operational dollars to complete the additional promotion. A response is expected from MOHLTC by early October 2011.

In addition, a package of information has been delivered to Board of Health members and their assistants, to raise awareness and promote this program to their constituents.