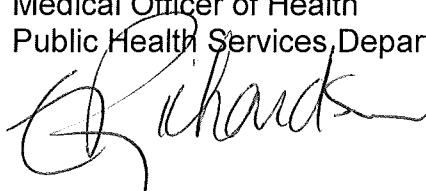
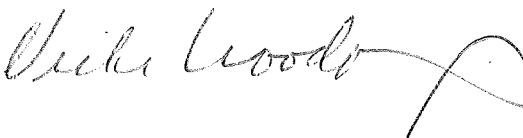




Hamilton

CITY OF HAMILTON

**Public Health Services/Community and Emergency Services Department
Health Protection/Housing Services Division**

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 17, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Bed Bug Strategy - BOH14010/CES14013 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Susan Harding-Cruz (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3576 Kirstin Maxwell (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3846
SUBMITTED BY:	Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department
SIGNATURES:	 Vicki Woodcox, Acting General Manager Emergency and Community Services Department 

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Public Health Services and the Community and Emergency Services Department be directed to develop a Community bed bug strategy for Hamilton by the first quarter of 2015;
- (b) That Public Health Services staff and the Community and Emergency Services Department staff be directed, as part of a bed bug strategy, to report back on item 6.3 from the September 16, 2013 Board of Health delegation submission by Shawn Comer and Ruth Comer, respecting Mr. Comer's ideas for pest prevention and for a potential bed bug registry for rental dwellings;

- (c) That Community and Emergency Services Department staff be directed to pilot a unit preparation service for low income, vulnerable residents, to develop community education materials regarding bed bugs, and to hire 1.0 temporary FTE for up to 18 months to develop the Community Bed Bug Strategy, for a total of \$200,000 to be funded from Bed Bug Eradication capital project #6731341301;
- (d) That Public Health Services be directed to provide navigation support, to assist vulnerable residents with bed bug infestation remediation processes using up to \$100,000 from the City's Unallocated Capital Reserve (#108020) to hire one temporary FTE navigator for a maximum of 18 months;
- (e) That Appendix "A" attached to Report BH14010/CES14013 respecting Bed Bug Action Group Membership and their Bed Bug Related Roles be approved;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bed bug infestation is a pervasive issue that needs a proactive, coordinated and immediate response. While bed bugs do not appear to transfer pathogens to humans, there remains a social cost to infestations and these pressures can impact health. The stigma, work, expense, sleeplessness and stress involved in dealing with an infestation are considerable.

Hamilton is challenged to control bed bug infestations effectively. Despite one-time provincial funding from 2011 to 2012, actions in the past two years to combat bed bugs have not been sufficient to slow or reverse the trend of the resurgence of bed bugs which began in Hamilton in 2006. An advisory structure, the Bed Bug Action Group, was formed in 2010 to address bed bugs and all involved agencies are committed to addressing bed bug issues. However, it is felt by all involved that a comprehensive and integrated bed bug strategy must be developed to better control bed bug infestations and support those directly affected, especially vulnerable residents.

Hamilton needs a clear, evidence-based bed bug strategy which will:

- Identify best practices and the most effective and efficient methods of bed bug prevention and control;
- Identify best practices for education;
- Determine how to best address bed bug infestations across a wide range of settings, including vulnerable populations;
- Ensure bed bug control efforts are coordinated across sectors;
- Make the most efficient use of our limited bed bug resources;
- Act as an advocacy tool to obtain the ongoing support of upper levels of government; and

- Provide a framework or model for other jurisdictions that face similar challenges with bed bugs; Hamilton could become a leader in the fight against bed bugs.

In order to develop the strategy, as well as more effectively support the community while the strategy is being developed, it is recommended that Council reallocate \$350,000 in existing capital funding and approve \$100,000 in additional one-time funding to support vulnerable residents through the steps of bed bug infestation remediation and to connect them to any additional required services. A temporary navigator would be hired for up to 18 months. The goal would be for the navigator to assist residents as they take steps to address the existing infestation, as well as prevent future infestations, including making necessary referrals or coordinating with other agencies.

In 2013, \$350,000 was approved in capital funding for the Housing Services Division to address bed bugs in Social Housing and Residential Care Facilities.

- \$150,000 of the funding is allocated to the Domiciliary Hostel Program to implement best practices for bed bug remediation at Residential Care Facilities. It is recommended that this be continued.
- \$200,000 was to be allocated to social housing providers to aid them in the eradication of bed bugs. Through a consultation process in 2013, social housing providers responded that \$200,000 was an insufficient amount to make an impact given the scope of the infestations and related costs. Given this feedback, it is recommended that:
 - \$100,000 be reallocated to the development of a bed bug strategy for Hamilton, and
 - \$100,000 be reallocated to fund a pilot unit preparation service during 2014 to assist low income vulnerable individuals who are unable to prepare their units due to physical or mental limitations and to develop educational materials.

It is recommended to use up to an additional \$100,000 from the City's Unallocated Capital Reserve (#108020) to hire a temporary navigator for up to 18 months to assist vulnerable residents.

The cost of addressing treatment of bed bug infestations falls onto landlords who ultimately pass that cost on to their tenants, thereby reducing affordability of housing. The cost of dealing with bed bugs is so significant that it may also be reducing the capacity of housing providers to produce more affordable housing or properly maintain the existing stock. A comprehensive bed bug strategy would aim to protect the health and well-being of residents along with the affordability and availability of rental housing units.

On December 11, 2013, Council endorsed the City's 10 year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. A comprehensive bed bug strategy would address Outcome 4, Strategy 4.5 of the Action Plan.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 10

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for recommendation(s) only)

Financial: As outlined above, funding for this initiative is recommended as follows:

- Continue to implement best practices for bed bug remediation at Residential Care Facilities at a cost of \$150,000 to be funded from Bed Bug Eradication capital project #6731341301.
- Hire 1.0 temporary FTE for a maximum of 18 months for the development of a bed bug strategy for Hamilton at a cost of \$100,000 to be funded from Bed Bug Eradication capital project #6731341301.
- Provide a unit preparation service during 2014 on a pilot basis and to develop educational materials at a total cost of \$100,000 to be funded from Bed Bug Eradication capital project #6731341301.
- Hire 1.0 temporary FTE navigator for a maximum of 18 months to support vulnerable residents with bed bug infestation remediation processes at a cost of \$100,000 to be funded from the Unallocated Capital Reserve (#108020). This reserve has an uncommitted balance to date of approximately \$7,000,000.

Staffing:

- One temporary FTE, up to 18 months reporting to the Housing Services Division to develop the bed bug strategy in consultation with the Bed Bug Advisory Group.
- One temporary FTE, up to 18 months reporting to Public Health Services (PHS) as a navigator for vulnerable residents.

Legal: Corporate policies will be followed for the provision of contracted services.

While there are no direct legal issues related to the introduction of a navigator to improve supports to vulnerable residents, it will improve services as well as allow for existing PHS resources to be returned to meeting the requirements under the Public Health Accountability Agreement with the Province, which have been a challenge in 2013.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

On January 10, 2011, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announced \$5 million in one-time funding for Ontario health units to provide education and outreach activities about bed bugs, and provide support to vulnerable populations affected by bed bugs. The funding was allocated to address an increase in bed bug infestations in various parts of Ontario. On June 9, 2011, Hamilton PHS received \$234,254 in one-time funding for bed bug purposes, to be used by March 31, 2012. This funding was used for education and outreach. These activities continued until December 2012 through the use of gapping dollars within budgeted programs in anticipation of possible renewal of provincial funding. With the lack of sustainable funding, education and outreach was curtailed in 2013; however, the community remains in need of these services.

The Bed Bug Action Group was formed in October 2010 to share information and coordinate bed bug activities across many sectors and continues to meet regularly. However, without dedicated resources or funding the group is challenged to develop a plan of action to best control bed bugs in Hamilton.

In 2013, \$350,000 was approved in capital funding for Housing Services Division to address bed bug issues in Social Housing and Residential Care Facilities. \$150,000 of the funding has been allocated to the Domiciliary Hostel Program to implement best practices for bed bug remediation at Residential Care Facilities. The original intention was to allocate \$200,000 to social housing providers to aid them in the eradication of bed bugs. Through a consultation process, social housing providers felt that \$200,000 was an insufficient amount to make an impact given the scope of the infestations and related costs. Alternatives were explored through further consultation with the Bed Bug Action Group to reallocate these funds.

Mr. Shawn Comer and Ruth Comer presented some questions and ideas to the Board of Health on September 16, 2013 about the potential for a Hamilton bed bug registry and about integrated pest management prevention programs they feel the City should consider. As part of the development of a comprehensive bed bug strategy, such questions can be addressed and the feasibility of these ideas examined.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no relevant legislated requirements for this report; however, once a bed bug strategy is developed, it may contain recommendations to change policies and or legislation, such as by-laws.

The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan

The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, endorsed by City Council on December 11, 2013, is a 10 year solution-focused, person-centred plan for addressing housing and homelessness issues in Hamilton. The Action Plan is identified as Strategic Action (xi) within Strategic Objective 1.5 of the 2012 – 2015 Strategic Plan.

Within Outcome Area 4 of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, “People live in housing that is good quality, safe and suitable to their needs”, Strategy 4.5 directly supports the development of a bed bug strategy: “Develop and implement a proactive and coordinated strategy to address bed bugs.” This strategy is a critical investment strategy, meaning that it has been given high priority among the 54 strategies of the Action Plan.

A comprehensive bed bug strategy would not only address Outcome 4, Strategy 4.5 of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, but has the potential to positively impact two additional outcomes of the Plan and related strategies: Outcome Area 1 which is “supply”, and Outcome Area 2 which is “affordability”.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

PHS staff and Community & Emergency Services Department staff, together with other City Department staff and stakeholder organizations such as City Housing Hamilton and Housing Help Centre, are members of the Bed Bug Action Group (BBAG). BBAG members and their respective roles are outlined in Appendix ‘A’ to Report BOH14010/CES14013. There is consensus among members that the lack of a clear strategy and sustainable financial resources are limiting factors in the successful control of bed bugs. BBAG is of the view that a clear comprehensive and integrated plan developed through collaboration of a full range of stakeholders with ongoing funding would allow the continuation of activities such as creating awareness, educating the public, and supporting vulnerable populations.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Bed Bug Issues

In recent years, there has been resurgence in the population of bed bugs and the issues they cause. This is due to factors such as: increased travel and mobility, pesticide limitations, pesticide resistance and high density living. Hamilton has not escaped this trend. Bed bugs can be found anywhere, from high-end hotels to apartment buildings, and more recently have been spotted in offices and some public places. Areas with higher concentrations of people and higher rates of occupant turnover, such as hotels experience more bed bug infestations. When bed bug infestations are not identified and dealt with promptly and thoroughly they grow and spread, impacting neighbours and

others to whom the infestation may be carried. Ultimately, bed bug infestations impact the whole community.

Bed bugs do not appear to transfer pathogens to humans (though they can carry them) and so do not result in acute infectious diseases. However, there remains a social cost to infestations, which can in turn impact health. The stigma, time, expense, sleeplessness and stress involved in dealing with an infestation are considerable. While bed bugs do not distinguish on the basis of economic status, people with fewer resources are less able to cope with and recover from an infestation. Vulnerable people may lack the resources to recognize an infestation, report it to a landlord, prepare for treatment, purchase mattress covers or, when an infestation is severe, purchase replacement furniture. They may not have the resources to do the significant amounts of laundry, cleaning, and preparation required for successful treatment.

Even with sufficient resources a bed bug infestation is costly and can lead to stigma, anxiety and emotional challenges. Needed services to the home sometimes stop, friends and family from visiting, and invitations are not extended. Sleeplessness is common. Additionally, effective bed bug treatment involves daily thorough vacuuming, washing of all clothing, bagging and sealing personal belongings until at least two pesticide applications are completed and potentially replacing severely infested furniture. This involves substantial work, stress and expense.

In many cases vulnerable persons need assistance with preparation to have success with treatment. A social navigator would help the vulnerable person by assessing their specific needs, and then support them by seeking out services to help with preparation and/or connecting the person, as needed, to agencies or programs to support them further in addressing their needs across the social determinants of health.

Bed bug infestations can affect anyone. Unchecked infestations may spread within a building or to other buildings, to neighbourhoods, and even public spaces. Bed bug control is not just an issue for those households currently infested; it is a community issue.

Bed Bugs in Hamilton

In Hamilton bed bug infestations are currently concentrated in higher turnover occupancy neighbourhoods and buildings.

City Housing Hamilton

City Housing Hamilton (CHH) serves over 13,000 residents across more than 7,000 units involving 1,265 properties. They have three bed bug inspectors who visit CHH rental units in response to complaints. If bed bugs are found, CHH provides information on how to prepare for treatment and will assist vulnerable tenants. A contractor is

dispatched to treat any infested unit. CHH received over 5,793 inbound calls from tenants in 2013 and spent \$920,843 on preparation and treatment costs.

CHH has a comprehensive program to address bed bug infestations. However, they continue to face challenges to control some bed bug infestations to a satisfactory level. New methods or a new plan of approach is needed in Hamilton to find more effective ways to control bed bugs in CHH housing and in the broader community.

Public Health Services

PHS provides the following supports to bed bug issues:

- Response to and investigation of, bed bug complaints that are subject to the pest section of Property Standards By-law 10-221;
- Bed bug identification;
- Education and resources to the community to raise awareness; and
- Collaboration with other City Departments and community partnerships via the Bed Bug Action Group (BBAG).

PHS responds to an average of 605 bed bug complaints each year. These are separate and distinct from the complaints responded to by CityHousing Hamilton. Currently, PHS has allocated 1.0 FTE public health inspector to respond to bed bug and other pest complaints. However, providing this new level of service is impacting the ability to meet requirements under the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Public Health Accountability Agreement the Board of Health has signed with the Province, specifically the ability to meet food premise inspection targets.

Bed Bug Action Group

The BBAG, formed in October 2010, is comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders from the City, as well as the non-profit and private sectors. Key objectives of BBAG are to facilitate a coordinated, efficient response to the issue of bed bugs, and provide a forum for acquiring and sharing of information and resources. Unfortunately, the group has stalled in its ability to meet these objectives because of a lack of time from members to develop the strategy. Members of BBAG believe it is now necessary to have a dedicated temporary staffing resource up to 18 months, to develop a comprehensive bed bug strategy to successfully address the problem of bed bugs in Hamilton.

Gaps in Existing Services and Programs

There are gaps in Hamilton's existing bed bug services and programs. While some education has been conducted, much more is needed. Bed bug control can be greatly improved if the public is widely educated on how to identify and treat bed bug infestations, and established preventive measures. The public, non-profit, and private

sector all find that the biggest impediment to bed bug control and treatment is the inability of some people to properly prepare for treatment. Supports are needed for those who require help to prepare, including coaching through the process, physical help, provision of mattress covers and replacement furniture if heavily infested, and help with laundry.

A Bed Bug Strategy for Hamilton

Hamilton needs a clear, evidence-based bed bug strategy which will:

- Identify best practices and the most effective and efficient methods of bed bug prevention and control;
- Identify best practices for education;
- Determine how to best address bed bug infestations across a wide range of settings, including with vulnerable populations;
- Ensure bed bug control efforts are coordinated across sectors;
- Make the most efficient use of our limited bed bug resources;
- Act as an advocacy tool to obtain the ongoing support of upper levels of government; and
- Provide a framework or model for other jurisdictions who face similar challenges with bed bugs.

The members of BBAG agree that to develop a strategy, a dedicated temporary staffing resource up to 18 months is needed who can:

- Gather evidence for better prevention, control, education, outreach and support; and
- Work with stakeholders to develop the plan.

BBAG would remain as an advisory group for the development of a strategy, as it includes a wide range of stakeholders. Development of a bed bug strategy would be a collaborative process of the City, the non-profit sector, and the private sector, as already demonstrated by BBAG.

The strategy work would include consideration of and reporting back on the September 16, 2013 delegation submission by Mr. Shawn Comer and Ruth Comer. Their submission suggests the establishment of a bed bug and pest fund, as well as a registry to give tenants pest information about rental buildings.

As noted above, it is recommended that existing capital funds be reallocated to hire a dedicated resource to develop the bed bug strategy. If any funds remain once the strategy is complete, they could be directed to its implementation.

Navigator Role

Until a comprehensive strategy is developed and implemented the temporary navigator role will serve as an interim support for vulnerable residents as they face substantial challenges of bed bug infestations. Navigator roles have proven successful in the health sector in helping vulnerable persons navigate through complex systems. One example is the CASTLE program (Creating Access to Screening and Training in the Living Environment), a cancer screening program in Hamilton led by PHS staff in collaboration with Juravinski Cancer Centre, McMaster University and other related agencies. Navigators are also being used by other agencies within the City to reduce overall duplication across agencies and improve timely access to services that best meet client needs.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

PHS and Community and Emergency Services could not develop a bed bug strategy, utilize the capital allocation as originally allocated and not extend further services to support vulnerable citizens. PHS would report back to Board of Health on item 6.3 from the September 16, 2013 Board of Health delegation submission by Shawn Comer and Ruth Comer, respecting Mr. Comer's ideas for pest prevention and for a potential bed bug registry for rental dwellings.

Financial: No new funds would be required.

Staffing: No new staff would be hired.

Legal: Council will be at risk of not meeting the Public Health Accountability Agreement with the province, unless other alternatives can be found to decrease pressures on inspection services.

Policy Implications: No policy implications.

Pros: Further funding from the capital reserve would not be spent.

Cons: Without a strategy PHS, the Community and Emergency Services Department and BBAG member organizations would continue to face challenges with bed bug infestations and supporting vulnerable residents. The current means of responding to these issues may not be the most effective, efficient nor result in curbing the problem, overall.

Additional time would be needed for PHS and the Community and Emergency Services Department staff to review Mr. Comer's ideas as the dedicated staff person would not be hired to develop the strategy. Mr. Comer's ideas would be reviewed for feasibility and evidence however as the review would be done in isolation it may not result in optimum recommendations.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

2012 – 2015 Strategic Plan Section

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

xi. Implement a 10 year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan with strategies to support:

- Increasing the supply of affordable rental and ownership housing;
- Developing a plan to improve housing affordability and geared to income that includes outlying communities in Hamilton with rising poverty issues; and
- Providing quality, safe and suitable housing options.

The goal of a bed bug strategy is to improve the health and well-being of residents and support the provision of quality, safe and suitable housing options for Hamiltonians. The bed bug problem is not only impacting people's well-being and quality of housing, but is adding to the costs of providing rental housing, thereby impacting the affordability and availability of Hamilton's rental housing stock over time. A comprehensive bed bug strategy would help protect the health and well-being of residents as well as the affordability and availability of rental units.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report BH14010/CES14013 – 2014 Bed Bug Action Group (BBAG) Membership and Bed Bug Related Roles

2014 Bed Bug Action Group (BBAG) Membership and Bed Bug Related Role – Gathered through Facilitated Bed Bug Action Group Meeting
February 26, 2014

Name of Organization	Bed Bug Related Role	Supports to Bed Bug Issues	Name of representative(s) on Bed Bug Action Group
Housing Help Centre	Provide referrals, build connections Advocacy Information portal	Housing stabilization Deliver Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) funding Rental housing	Larry Huibers (Co-chair)
City of Hamilton Public Health Services	By law enforcement Education/Outreach Provide resources Influence policy development Facilitate complaints Provide referrals and connections Identify bugs	Education Advocacy Resource development	Susan Harding-Cruz (Co-chair) Connie DeBenedet Shelley Sharpen (recorder) Steve Susnik
City of Hamilton Community and Emergency Services Housing Services Division CityHousing Hamilton	Implement the Housing Homelessness Action Plan Oversee and manage contracts Provide tenant supports Provide expert knowledge	Develop a bed bug strategy Provide funding Resolve tenant issues Maintain/protect asset value Contract for pest control Structural expertise	Gillian Hendry Kirstin Maxwell Matt Bowen Kelly Miller
City of Hamilton City Manager's Office Health, Safety and Wellness	Support employees exposed during work Policy development	Voice of the employee Internal education and training	David Lindeman Kari Lindsay Michelle Lokun

Name of Organization	Bed Bug Related Role	Supports to Bed Bug Issues	Name of representative(s) on Bed Bug Action Group
Canadian Mental Health Association Residential Skills Development Program	Supports persons that have bed bugs	Advocate Reduce stigma	Kelly Comely
Landlord Representation and Real Estate Board	Contract pest control Educate property stakeholders	Maintain/ improve property values Manage properties effectively and efficiently Provide structural expertise Improve properties image for resale (seller disclosure)	Dan Casuccio H.D.A.A Tina Novak, Greenwin Property Management Augustino Ammendolia
Hamilton Community Legal Clinic	Advise tenants on legal rights	Advocate for change Advocacy for provincial bed bug funding Advocacy for Bed Bugs to be declared health hazard	Donna Eaton
Tenant Advisory Committee	Voice of the tenant Research issues impacting tenants	Advise/advocate Improve the City's image (in particular the downtown core)	John Hawker
Councillor's Office, Ward 1	Members not available for Facilitated meeting:		Nikola Wojewoda-Patti

Name of Organization	Bed Bug Related Role	Supports to Bed Bug Issues	Name of representative(s) on Bed Bug Action Group
Hamilton Public Library			Julianna McCormick
City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Department Municipal Law Enforcement			Kelly Barnett
Good Shepherd Works City of Hamilton Public Works Waste Collection Customer Service and Community Outreach			Andy Skrypniak Colin Vidler Stephen Bailey