



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	December 12, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Community Bed Bug Strategy (CES16065) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Terry Quinn 905-546-2424 ext. 3080
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Grace Mater Director, Children's and Home Management Services Community and Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

On October 28, 2015, Board of Health endorsed Hamilton's Community Bed Bug Strategy 2016-2019 (BOH14010(a)/CES14013(a)). On December 4, 2015, Council approved \$1,060,000 in capital funding over three years to implement the strategy.

## Information:

Hamilton's Community Bed Bug Strategy (the Strategy) is a three-year plan that was developed in collaboration between the City and community agencies in consultation with community members who have lived experience with bed bugs and people who work in higher risk occupations for exposure to bed bugs.

The long-term goals of the Strategy are to:

- 1) Minimize the movement of bed bugs from place to place;
- 2) Identify and reduce significant infestations that can serve as reservoirs for spreading bed bugs; and,
- 3) Create living, work and community spaces that are less receptive to bed bug infestations.

---

*OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.*

*OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.*

*OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.*

The following is an update on the six priority areas of the strategy:

**Direct assistance for residents, in particular vulnerable populations**

Without effective unit preparation and treatment of infested personal belongings, results of pest control efforts are limited and the chance of re-infestation is much greater. Actions completed or underway include:

- The Housing Help Centre for Hamilton & Wentworth (HHC) has been contracted by the City to manage a Bed Bug Assistance Program;
- HHC is currently accepting applications for assistance and determining eligibility based on the established criteria; and,
- HHC is engaging appropriate community organizations (as needed) to provide assistance and is coordinating this work with the landlord's pest control efforts.

City staff will work together with HHC to monitor the use and effectiveness of the Bed Bug Assistance Program. Situations where assistance is provided to a qualifying tenant will also be used to demonstrate to the landlord the level of supports they may need to provide special needs tenants in any future infestations.

**Workplace Training and Policy**

Workplaces have a responsibility to develop policies that protect workers from acquiring bed bugs and to limit the spread of bed bugs via workplace exposure. This is especially important in service sectors that manage facilities where the public congregate or where home visits are a routine part of delivering their service. Actions supporting this priority that are completed or underway include:

- An environmental scan of Hamilton's largest employers to gather information on their current policies and procedures related to bed bugs has been completed;
- A list of service industries where staff are at an increased risk of bed bug exposure is being developed. This list will assist with the prioritizing and messaging to employers; and,
- Over the next year, the City will develop resources to assist local employers and employees understand, protect against and respond to bed bug workplace exposure.

This work is being done in collaboration with a working group of Hamilton's Bed Bug Advisory Group (BBAG). BBAG is a group of community members and organizations that has guided community efforts at combatting bed bugs since 2008.

**Public Education and Prevention**

It is crucial that the stigma surrounding bed bugs be addressed in order that bed bug identification and response efforts can be effective. As well, residents need trustworthy and useful information to assist in the prevention, early identification and treatment of

bed bugs. The comprehensive health promotion campaign supporting this priority includes actions that are completed or underway as follows:

- A public advertising campaign is currently under development. Campaign goals include reducing the stigma of bed bugs, empowering residents to take effective actions and directing interested members of the public to a trustworthy source of information. Bus shelter ads, billboards and other media will be included in this two year campaign that will begin in early 2017;
- Fact sheets are being developed and updated to assist residents with prevention and identification of bed bugs;
- How-to guides and checklists are being created for landlords, tenants and pest control companies to make pest control efforts more effective. These resources are being developed to encourage behaviour changes that are needed to help residents take action with proven prevention and treatment efforts; and,
- Enhancements of the City's Bed Bug webpages are underway.

These fact sheets, checklists and guides will be evidence-based best practice in the field of bed bug prevention and treatment. Some of this information is currently available online at [www.Hamilton.ca/bedbugs](http://www.Hamilton.ca/bedbugs) and more will be added in 2017.

### **Integrated Pest Management**

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the most effective way to control and manage bed bugs. IPM programs combine traditional chemical pest control treatments with ongoing maintenance, proactive inspections by occupants and landlords, and a combination of activities that effectively prepare a unit for treatment and reduce the impact of bed bugs while they are present. Actions supporting this priority that are completed or underway include:

- Identification of barriers to implementing an effective IPM in multi-unit dwellings, work spaces and community spaces;
- Development of toolkits to assist landlords to take a proactive approach to bed bug treatment and effectively communicate with tenants. These efforts will leverage work underway in the other priority areas such as Public Education and Workplace Training; and,
- Over the next two years, information and advocacy work so landlords are encouraged to go beyond the traditional chemical pest control treatments currently relied upon.

Work in this priority area is being done in collaboration with a working group of BBAG.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to measure the progress of the Bed Bug Strategy and its impact on the spread and effective treatment of bed bugs in Hamilton. While it is challenging to count

---

*OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.*

*OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.*

*OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.*

the number of dwellings that have bed bugs or the overall impact on residents, a number of key indicators have been created to measure the effectiveness of efforts made by the City and community. Actions supporting this priority that are completed or underway include:

- An evaluation framework and logic model with key success indicators has been developed to measure the progress of the Bed Bug Strategy;
- Data Collection Tools have been developed including the Direct Assistance Program Survey, landlord survey, updated bed bug complaint log and tracking the number of bed bug related calls to the Customer Contact Centre to measure the effectiveness of actions taken and the number of bed bug issues reported; and,
- Baseline data is being collected where possible.

Work in this priority area is being done in collaboration with a working group of BBAG.

### **Support and Advocacy**

To support the strategy, the City of Hamilton has invested in resources for implementation and monitoring.

- A project manager and a health promotion specialist were assigned mid-year 2016 after completion of previous assignments. The three year capital project forecast will show approved funding being extended to mid-year 2019 to reflect the three year approval and to better align with the 2019 budget approval timeline.
- A number of advocacy efforts are underway or planned. Recent consultation and City comments on the National Housing Strategy have included bed bug related issues; and,
- Public Health is exploring revisions to the pest section of the Property Standards by-law or to create a stand-alone bed bug or pest by-law. Changes will include requirements to follow Integrated Pest Management practices for bed bug control.

Staff is also investigating other opportunities for advocacy that would assist the community in combatting bed bugs.

### **Project Budget**

The project is currently operating within the capital budget approved by Council.

- The delay in hiring staff until mid-year has resulted in less spending in 2016 than planned

- The three year capital project forecast will show the project being extended to mid-year 2019 to reflect the late start. This extension will align well with the 2019 budget approval timeline and allow services to continue into 2019 while Council considers any new funding that may be requested at that time.

### **Next Steps**

Priorities for 2017 include:

- Updates to the City website to include useful information that helps residents take action with proven bed bug prevention and treatment efforts.
- Launch of a public advertising campaign to address the stigma of bed bugs and direct interested members of the public to the City website for more information. Bus shelter ads, billboards and online advertising will be the primary media.
- Education for landlords and building superintendents on the best practices in proactive bed bug control and the importance of undertaking an integrated pest management approach.
- Monitoring the use and effectiveness of the Bed Bug Assistance Program to ensure it meets the needs of Hamilton's most vulnerable residents dealing with bed bugs.
- Developing resources to assist local employers and employees understand, protect against and respond to bed bug workplace exposure; and,
- Exploring revisions to the pest section of the Property Standards by-law or to create a stand-alone bed bug or pest by-law.

---

*OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.*

*OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.*

*OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.*