



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy Families Division

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	July 10, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Seniors Oral Health (BOH19026) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Pat Armstrong (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7158
SUBMITTED BY:	Jennifer Vickers-Manzin, CNO Director, Healthy Environments Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Board of Health authorize and direct the Medical Officer of Health to receive, utilize and submit reports back on the funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to support the delivery of a dental program for low-income seniors, and that staff report back to the Board of Health by end of Q3 2019 on the development of the program locally.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oral health impacts overall health and wellbeing. Population health and program data show that poor oral health is common in Hamilton and unequally affects the city's most vulnerable populations. Within our vulnerable populations, seniors experience significant challenges accessing dental care due to low dental insurance coverage and low percentage who visit the dentist regularly.

Many Hamilton seniors who need dental care do not have dental insurance coverage and cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket. As a result, seniors are increasingly seeking dental care from hospital emergency departments rather than seeking treatment early and regularly.

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.

As recently announced in Ontario's 2019 budget, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) recognizes the importance of the public health sector's role in supporting and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations to help prevent disease, complications and hospitalizations. The goal is that the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program will help reduce unnecessary trips to the hospital, prevent chronic disease and increase quality of life for seniors.

Public Health Units (PHUs) will be the entities receiving operating base funding from the MOHLTC to implement the program in their local jurisdiction.

Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) will receive up to \$2,248,100 in additional base funding to support a new dental program for low-income seniors (Appendix "A" to BOH19026). This program is being funded at 100% provincial funding (i.e. not cost-shared with municipalities).

As a funding requirement, the Board of Health must enter into discussion with all local Community Health Centers (CHCs) and Aboriginal Health Access Centers (AHACs) to ascertain the feasibility of a service delivery partnership.

Forthcoming amendments to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and related protocols from the MOHLTC will outline PHU requirements and operational roles and responsibilities (e.g. service delivery; oral health navigation; data collection and analysis; and reporting). Eligibility criteria, the application process, enrolment and the service schedule will also be available.

The Ministry has advised that the program will have a staged implementation. The first phase is to begin late summer 2019 and will include leveraging existing infrastructure to provide dental care to eligible low-income seniors at PHUs, CHCs, and AHACs.

The second phase will be implemented this coming Winter (2019). The Program will be expanded by investing in new dental services in underserved areas, including through mobile dental buses and an increased number of dental suites in PHUs.

Staff will report back to the Board of Health by end of Q3 2019 on the development of the Seniors Dental Care Program locally, following consultation with CHCs and AHACs, and clearer direction from the Ministry.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable.

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Up to \$2,248,100 in additional base funding from the MOHLTC to support the new dental program for low-income seniors.

Staffing: Dental program staffing will increase based on the model of care and hours of operations that are developed to support the new low-income seniors program in the downtown dental clinic and dental health bus.

Legal: All partnerships must be governed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Board of Health (BOH) and CHC or AHAC, outlining performance expectations, funding and reporting requirements, and accountability mechanisms. SLAs will be developed once PHS has ascertained the feasibility of a service delivery partnership with local CHCs and AHACs.

It is anticipated that the Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreement will be updated to reflect amendments to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and related protocols that will outline PHU requirements and operational roles and responsibilities.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Currently, the City of Hamilton provides dental services to low-income seniors through the Public Health Dental Clinic and the dental health bus for those unable to access financial support for dental care. Additionally, City of Hamilton residents who require dental care can apply for funding for treatment through Ontario Work's Special Support Program. In 2018, staff collaborated with Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) to develop and implement Oral Health Enhancements including enhancing supplemental denture coverage for eligible low-income seniors.

Staff will report back on the implications for these programs once we have further details from the MOHLTC.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Forthcoming amendments to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and related protocols from the MOHLTC will outline PHU requirements and operational roles and responsibilities (e.g. service delivery; oral health navigation; data collection and analysis; and reporting).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

PHS is currently consulting with relevant internal programs, CHCs, and AHACs in Hamilton. After engagement internally and with community groups, and collective planning concludes, PHS will report back to the Board of Health by the end of Q3 2019 on the local development of the Seniors' Oral Health Program.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

Oral health is linked to overall health and is an important health issue for seniors. As people age, their oral health may become worse due to medications, medical conditions as well as limited mobility issues that make good oral hygiene difficult to maintain. In addition, seniors may face further barriers to accessing dental care due to cost, limited physical and cognitive abilities and transportation.

Many Hamiltonian seniors who need dental care do not have dental insurance coverage and cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket. As a result, seniors are increasingly seeking dental care from hospital emergency departments rather than seeking treatment early and regularly (Appendix "B" to BOH19026). Untreated health issues, such as infection, pain and abscesses, can lead to chronic disease and lower quality of life.

The senior population in Hamilton is projected to increase by 71,500 by the year 2039. In 2018 there were 102,500 seniors living in Hamilton, and 60% of seniors do not have dental insurance coverage. Moreover, there has been a steady increase in seniors visiting local emergency departments for dental care with double the number of visits from seniors living in low-income areas compared to those living in high-income areas (Appendix "B" to BOH19026).

In 2018, the dental clinic and dental health bus provided 1014 appointments for 490 seniors. The dental health bus turned away 587 clients of all ages. It is anticipated that with population growth there will be an increase in demand for services over the next 20 years.

With the April 2019 provincial budget, the MOHLTC recently announced a new publicly-funded dental care program for low-income seniors that will begin in late summer 2019. The Ministry has issued operational funding letters listing allocations to support program planning and development. There is a commitment of an annual investment of up to \$2,248,100.00 in 100% provincial dollars for a new Ontario Seniors' Oral Health Program in the City of Hamilton.

As a funding requirement, the Board of Health must enter into discussion with all local CHCs and AHACs to ascertain the feasibility of a service delivery partnership.

Income eligibility for single seniors is \$19,300 and for a couple less than \$32,300. Population data indicates that there are 10,230 seniors in Hamilton who may be eligible for this program. The Ministry is utilizing an expert panel to finalize its schedule of services.

The program will be accessed by an application process through the Ministry like the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program. The program will provide direct dental preventive and treatment services to eligible seniors through Public Health Clinics, CHCs and AHACs.

The Ministry has indicated that implementation will be staged. The first phase is to be implemented by late summer 2019 and will deliver dental services to low-income seniors by leveraging existing infrastructure. The second phase is to be implemented by Winter 2019 and will expand the program by investing in new dental infrastructure.

Staff will report back to the Board of Health by end of Q3 2019 on the development of the Seniors Dental Care Program locally, following consultation with CHCs and AHACs, and clearer direction from the Ministry.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report BOH19026:	City of Hamilton, Public Health Services: 2019-20 Funding for the New Dental Program for Low-income Seniors
Appendix “B” to Report BOH19026:	Hamilton Seniors Oral Health Report 2018- 2019