



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy Families Division

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 10, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Budget 2022-2023 (BOH22015) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Bonnie King (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1587
SUBMITTED BY:	Jennifer Vickers-Manzin, CNO Director, Healthy Families Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- a) That the 2022-2023 Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program budget, funded primarily by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services be approved; and,
- b) That the Medical Officer of Health or delegate be authorized and directed to receive, utilize, report on and execute all Service agreements and contracts, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, required to give effect to the 2022-2023 Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program budget; and,
- c) That the Medical Officer of Health or delegate be authorized and directed to receive, utilize, and report on the grant received from the Hamilton Community Foundation for the Nurse Family Partnership program for 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) program is a long standing, evidence-based, provincial program that provides vital support to vulnerable families with young children at risk for poor developmental outcomes. The program goal is to improve the well-being and long-term health and development of expectant parents, infants, young children and families through prevention, early identification, and home visiting interventions. The provision of the HBHC program is mandatory for all boards of health, who are responsible to provide all components of the program.

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Pregnancy, bringing a new baby home and parenting young children can be more challenging when risks such as poverty, unstable housing, intimate partner violence, mental health and addiction are present. The impact of these risks on families and young children has been significantly magnified due to COVID-19.

HBHC has been 100% funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) since 1997. However, due to capped funding since 2015, program funding has been enhanced through a variety of sources including the Hamilton Community Foundation (e.g. Nurse-Family Partnership program), Ministry of Health (e.g. 70/30 funding), and City of Hamilton levy. While some efficiencies have been achieved through use of virtual visits in addition to in-home visits, it is anticipated the impacts of COVID-19 will exacerbate program pressures as the need for early intervention supports for families has increased. This will impact the number of families that will be referred to the program resulting in longer wait times for service and prioritization of services to the highest risk families.

The City of Hamilton, Board of Health recently endorsed a letter sent from the Medical Officer of Health (Sudbury and District Health Unit) to MCCSS requesting “the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to review base-funding needs for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program to ensure this essential program is sufficiently resourced to meet the current and growing needs of children and a healthy start in life.” Hamilton has made a similar request to MCCSS.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: HBHC is intended to be 100% funded by the Province. However, it has not received any increase to funding since 2015 resulting in reduced capacity to service high risk families due to annual fixed cost increases to salaries, benefits, and operating costs. HBHC is supported with funding from other sources who recognize, and value the positive and longstanding impact home visiting has on expectant parents and families with infants and young children in the community.

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MCCSS Funding	2022/2023 Budget	2021/2022 Budget	Comments
HBHC Public Health Services	\$2,940,293 28.9 FTE	\$2,940,293 28.9 FTE	A pressure of approximately \$182,000 (Salaries & benefits) will be mitigated through delayed posting of temp vacancies rather than a decrease to program FTE.
Wesley Family Home Visitors Contract	\$593,620 10 FTE	\$593,620 11.0 FTE	1.0 FTE decreased through attrition by Wesley to stay within cap
TOTAL	\$3,533,913	\$3,533,913¹	

^{1.} While HBHC routinely mitigates annual budget pressures through delayed recruitment of vacancies and is fully spent, 2021/2022 was an anomaly with an approximate favourable variance of \$210,000 due to continued staff deployment to COVID-19 and recruitment challenges. These funds will be recovered by MCCSS.

Other Approved Funding	2022 Budget	2021 Budget	Comments
City of Hamilton, salaries & benefits	\$163,830	\$157,259	1.5 FTE Public Health Nurse - HBHC
City of Hamilton, Cost Allocations/ contributions	\$339,785	\$332,754	Costs not allowable
City of Hamilton, Family Home Visiting program (Wesley)	\$36,000	\$36,000	(BOH11004) Family Home Visiting costs above provincial cap
70/30 Cost Shared programs	\$114,678.32	\$112,038	1.0 Public Health Nurse - Nurse Family Partnership
Hamilton Community Foundation Grant	\$30,784	\$39,000	Nurse Family Partnership operational costs (BOH07035(k))

Staffing: HBHC is provided primarily by public health nurses to deliver the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) program and to deliver HBHC blended home visiting services in partnership with Family Home Visitors that are

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employed by Wesley. Wesley has informed Public Health Services that a 1.0 FTE reduction through attrition will be implemented stay within the budget cap. While some efficiencies have been achieved through use of virtual visits in addition to in-home visits it is anticipated this reduction will impact the number of families that will be serviced through the program as well as wait times for service. The program will identify service impacts of the FTE reduction through 2022.

Legal: Public Health Services is mandated to provide all components of the HBHC Program. A contract is signed between the Province and the City of Hamilton Public Health Services, including budget approvals and program targets.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

HBHC is a prevention, early identification and early intervention program that is continually refined based on need and emerging evidence of effective interventions.

Pregnancy, bringing a new baby home and parenting young children can be more challenging when risks such as poverty, unstable housing, intimate partner violence, mental health and addiction are present. The impact of these risks on families and young children has been significantly magnified due to the COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, HBHC has continued to offer evidence-based interventions to support healthy pregnancies and birth outcomes, build parental confidence, strengthen positive parenting, and enhance the connections between parents and their children to promote infant and early years mental health. HBHC has continued to build on parents' strengths and facilitate connections with community supports that are essential in achieving health and well-being.

The goal of HBHC is to help parents create an environment that leads to healthy babies, healthy children and later, to healthy adults through:

- 1. Universal and Targeted Screening:**

HBHC screening is offered in variety of community settings to families during pregnancy, postpartum and during the early years to identify vulnerable families, infants, and young children at risk for poor development. Identifying families with risk is particularly important during pregnancy, as the period between conception and birth provides the foundation of a child's well-being. In 2021, of 5,457 families screened for developmental risk, 3,481 (64%) had identified risk factors and were referred to Public Health for follow up: and,

- 2. Long Term Home Visiting:**

Families identified at risk are offered an initial assessment visit to confirm risk

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and offer the best supports to meet the needs of families. Families who would benefit from home visiting support are referred to the most appropriate intervention including:

- **HBHC Blended home visiting program:**
Public Health Nurses and Family Home Visitors work collaboratively with families to achieve the priority goals of Healthy Attachment, Positive Parenting and Optimal Growth and Development. Social determinants of health impacting families are identified, and families are connected to supports/services in the community; and,
- **Nurse Family Partnership program:**
A research-proven Public Health Nurse home visitation program for young, pregnant, first time mothers with socio-economic risk factors. The Public Health Nurse supports parents during pregnancy, birth and through the first two years of their child's life through partnership to improve their parenting skills and create a healthy environment where their child's growth and development is nurtured.

HBHC has continued to build strong community partnerships throughout COVID-19, extending the reach to pregnant individuals at risk by encouraging and facilitating health professionals and community service providers to offer HBHC screening to the individuals with whom they have contact. While the majority of visits were conducted by phone and virtual means in 2021, face to face home visiting resumed in late 2021, and is once again the predominant intervention strategy with use of virtual visiting in some circumstances.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, HBHC continued to support community planning efforts regarding infant and early years mental health promotion including the development of a community pathway for families with identified concerns regarding the social and emotional development of their young children (from birth to school entry). Beginning in September, the HBHC program will become the first point of entry for families to receive support, screening and assessment, intervention and referral when they have concerns regarding their infant and/or young child's social and emotional development (mental health).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (OPHS) are published by the Ministry of Health under the authority of Section 7 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)* to specify the mandatory health programs and services provided by boards of health. HBHC is a mandatory

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program under the Healthy Growth and Development Standard and the HBHC program protocol provides the minimum expectations for service delivery.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Finance and Administration has been consulted regarding the preparation of the budget.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

HBHC has not received increased funding from MCCSS again this year and pressures due to annual salary and benefit increases will be offset through gapping temporary vacancies.

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.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.