



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy Families Division

TO:	Mayor and Members Public Health Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 8, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Child and Youth Mental Health Transformation and Child and Adolescent Services Budget 2023-2024 (BOH23029) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Lynn Foye (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3697 Jennifer Vickers-Manzin (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4888
SUBMITTED BY:	Jennifer Vickers-Manzin, CNO Director, Healthy Families Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

Discussion of Confidential Appendix “A” to Report BOH23029 in closed session is subject to the following requirement(s) of the City of Hamilton’s Procedural By-law and the *Ontario Municipal Act, 2001*:

- Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including City or local board employees; and,
- Labour relations or employee negotiations

RATIONALE FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential Appendix “A” to Report BOH23029 is being considered in Closed Session as it contains information regarding an identifiable individual, labour relations, or employee negotiations.

RATIONALE FOR MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential Appendix “A” to Report BOH23029 is recommended to remain confidential until approved by Council.

RECOMMENDATION (CLOSED SESSION)

Refer to Confidential Appendix “A” to Report BOH23029.

RECOMMENDATION (OPEN SESSION)

- (a) That the 2023-2024 Child and Adolescent Services Program budget funded by the Ministry of Health be approved;
- (b) That the Medical Officer of Health, or delegate, be authorized and directed to execute all agreements, contracts, extensions and documents, including submission of budgets and reports required to give effect to all the 2023-2024 Child and Adolescent Services Program budget approved in Report BOH23029;
- (c) That the Medical Officer of Health be authorized and directed to enter into a 24-month secondment agreement with Lynwood Charlton Centre with the option to renew for an additional 24 months, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor;
- (d) That the direction to staff within Confidential Appendix “A” to Report BOH23029 be approved and remain confidential until approved by Council; and,
- (e) That Item 2021-G, respecting the challenges, referrals and waiting lists for child and adolescent counselling services within the City's network of Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services, be removed from the Public Health Committee Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has a dual purpose. Firstly, to outline Child and Adolescent Services annual program and budget for consideration and approval by the Public Health Committee. Secondly, to inform the Public Health Committee on the challenges, referrals and waiting lists for child and adolescent counselling services within the City's network of Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Services. An accompanying presentation to this report is aimed at supporting the information about the child and adolescent mental health system in Hamilton.

Within Public Health Services, Child and Adolescent Services delivers outpatient mental health services for children and youth from birth to 18 years of age experiencing social, emotional and/or behavioural problems, and their families. Child and Adolescent Services programs are 100% funded by the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health has communicated a 5% increase to the Child and Adolescent Services 2023-2024 operating base budget. This increase will enable the program to maintain clinical staff and increase administrative staff by 0.2 FTE.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an increased need for child and youth mental health services, higher client acuity and more complex social and health care service coordination needs. There has been an acute shift in child and youth mental health service delivery and system wide workforce challenges. These factors exacerbated pre-existing challenges in access, prolonged service duration, and created longer wait times. These challenges are experienced across all service providers in Hamilton and extend across the province of Ontario.

To ensure Child and Adolescent Services is enhancing access for those most vulnerable, brief services quick access program and specialized services for children from birth to six years of age have been expanded in high priority neighbourhoods. Children and youth presenting with significant challenges are supported through specialized assessment and consultation with a psychological associate. A partnership with Lynwood Charlton Centre to second the Child and Adolescent Services Psychologist enables more children and youth in our community to access this service.

In 2020, the Ministry of Health launched the Roadmap to Wellness, a provincial initiative to build on the Moving on Mental Health strategy. The initiative aims to improve access to high quality mental health services, enhance existing services in priority areas, implement innovative solutions to fill gaps in care and to create a responsive and integrated system. Child and Adolescent Services programs fall within the Roadmap to Wellness initiative.

To support transformation, the Ministry of Health designates Lead Agencies responsible for leading and facilitating system reform. The Lead Agency is responsible for building on local and provincial priorities while advancing quality of care and optimization of services for children and youth mental health. In Hamilton, Lynwood Charlton Centre is designated as the lead agency.

Lynwood Charlton Centre works alongside eight Child and Youth Mental Health Core Service Providers to address local priorities and work to improve: service access and coordination, wait times, data collection and information dissemination, youth and family engagement, and early and infant mental health. In addition to local planning, recent provincial initiatives such as One Stop Talk, are being implemented to address wait times, ease access, and improve quality of service through a more connected system.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The Ministry of Health 2023-2024 funding will enable Child and Adolescent Services to maintain permanent clinical therapist staffing. \$89,057 from the 5% base increase will be used to offset cost of living, step increases.

This Ministry of Health 2023-2024 funding will also enable Child and Adolescent Services to increase administrative support by 0.2 FTE Program Secretary (\$25,944).

Table 1: Ministry of Health Funding, Children and Youth Mental Health Services

Year	Annual Budget	FTE
2021-2022	\$2,300,018	18.00
2022-2023	\$2,300,018	18.00
2023-2024	\$2,415,019	18.20

Staffing: Additional staffing recommendations are outlined Appendix “A” to Report BOH23029.

Legal: Child and Adolescent Services is contracted with the Ministry of Health to provide programs and services to children and youth, aged birth to 18 years old.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The need to strengthen the mental health system for children, youth and families has a long history in the Province.

In 2014, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services began the process of designating lead agencies in each community service area. Lead agencies were charged with the task of ensuring core, community-based child and youth mental health services are available in their service area and collaborating with other community partners to ensure alignment of core services within the broader community. In Hamilton, Lynwood Charlton Centre was designated as the lead agency.

In 2015, Ministry of Children and Youth Services released a document that outlined the minimum expectations of service providers regarding the delivery of services. The guidance provided framework for local planning between 2016-2019, inclusive of:

- Engaging stakeholders in the development of the Core Service Delivery and Community Mental Health Plan in Hamilton; and

- Identification of six local priority areas to improve the model of community-based service delivery in the Hamilton service area.

In 2019, funding of children and youth mental health services transferred from Ministry of Children and Youth Services to Ministry of Health. In 2020, Ministry of Health launched the Roadmap to Wellness, a Provincial initiative to build on the Moving on Mental Health strategy. The initiative aims to improve access to high quality mental health services, enhance existing services in priority areas, implement innovative solutions to fill gaps in care and create a responsive and integrated system that builds awareness and capacity about mental health issues within communities. Child and Adolescent Services programs fall within the Roadmap to Wellness initiative.

In 2021, to inform local Child and Youth Mental Health sector response and recovery from the pandemic, Lynwood conducted a stakeholder review. The review recommended efforts focus on:

- The development of a short-term pandemic recovery plan;
- Establishment of a community wide strategic body to develop and advise Hamilton region child and youth mental health;
- Development of citywide outcome measures inclusive of the social determinants of health; and,
- Further sector wide review to better understand and realize organizational capacity building to address COVID-19 impacts on the breadth and depth of community infant, child and youth mental health needs.

In 2022, the Child and Youth Service System Committee, a multi-sectoral planning table, reconvened to review and update terms of reference and draft an action plan. This work was paused as Core Service Providers focused on recovery efforts to address high volume and acuity, staff wellness and long waitlists. This committee has since been disbanded in favour of pursuing a multi-sectorial committee focused on child and youth wellbeing. Lynwood will be forming a new committee in the coming months examining the impact of social determinants of health on child and youth wellbeing.

In Hamilton, Lynwood works alongside eight Child and Youth Mental Health Core Service Providers to address local priorities and improve: service access and coordination, wait times, data and information, youth and family engagement and, early and infant mental health. Child and Adolescent Services is one of the eight Core Service Providers. Child and Adolescent Services' services are delivered through a variety of programs to children, youth and their families. Clinical services range from brief, single session therapy to time-limited individual psychotherapy and family-oriented caregiver sessions.

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

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Provincially funded child and youth mental health services are provided to children and youth under 18 years of age under the authority of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. Services and supports that address a range of social, emotional, behavioural, psychological and/or psychiatric problems are provided to children and youth who are at risk of, or who have developed, mental health problems, illnesses, or disorders.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

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

Human Resources has been consulted regarding complement changes.

Legal Services has been consulted and provided direction regarding entering into a new Secondment Agreement with Lynwood Charlton Centre. Legal Services prepared the previous Secondment Agreement with Thrive Child and Youth Trauma Services (BOH21005), which the proposed Secondment Agreement will replace.

Consultations have taken place with members of Lynwood Charlton Centre in relation to Recommendation (c) and to prepare for joint presentation, and included the following:

- Lisa Whitaker, Executive Director Lynwood Charlton Centre, Child and Youth Mental Health Lead Agency; and,
- Michelle Hayes, Director of System Planning, Lynwood Charlton Centre

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Each year Child and Adolescent Services provides high quality, evidence-based mental health treatment services to approximately 750 new children, youth, and their families in addition to those carried in from the previous year. The number of families served by Child and Adolescent Services each year is variable and dependent on several factors such as: the number of families referred; the length of time each family requires services; and staffing levels and the length of wait for services. Many of these clients are vulnerable children or youth dealing with serious emotional and/or behavioural problems as well as complex social problems such as the lack of sufficient housing and the experience of homelessness and poverty. The combination of a greater demand for service and higher acuity of children and youth seeking service has greatly increased the average wait times across the sector and at Child and Adolescent Services.

Child and Adolescent Services are delivered through a variety of programs to children, youth and their families. For example, clinical services range from brief, single session therapy to time-limited individual psychotherapy and family-oriented caregiver sessions. Play-based therapy programs for infants up to six years of age and their caregivers, and

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activity and skills-based groups for children, youth and adolescents are also offered in clinic and community settings. The Brief Services Quick Access clinic acts as a front door to most service while providing timely and therapeutic interventions. In 2022, to support early intervention, we worked closely with internal Public Health Services programs to increase access and intervention in the early years. As a result, we have increased the number of visits among clients from birth to six years of age by 67% from 2020 to 2022. Based on 2023 projections, we expect a 175% increase in visits among children from birth to six years of age when compared to 2020.

More intensive services offered through Child and Adolescent Services' Counselling and Therapy program may include specialized assessment with a psychological associate to provide psychological screening, testing and appropriate treatment recommendations. Psychological services are an invaluable component of community-based mental health treatment. Continued partnership made possible through a Secondment Agreement with Lynwood Charlton Centre will enable Public Health Services' Psychological Associate to continue to provide psychological screening, testing and appropriate treatment recommendations to client families two days per week at Lynwood Charlton Centre. This service supports front line clinicians to offer treatment tailored to the unique needs of the client family, improving treatment participation and outcomes. Lynwood Charlton Centre assumes full salary and benefits costs for 0.4 FTE Psychological Associate as well as the costs of related expenses including testing materials, technology assets and staff expenses incurred in relation to the provision of services while at Lynwood Charlton Centre. Child and Adolescent Services program budget covers the cost of 0.6 FTE Psychological Associate as part of the permanent complement. The Secondment agreement supports a collaborative and connected service continuum model, improved consistency and quality of care and, reduced duplication for children, youth, and their families who often require more specialized and intensive services to successfully engage in and, complete treatment.

In addition to clinical services Child and Adolescent Services staff work closely with internal and external partners to ensure client families are connected to essential social care supports.

Child and Youth Mental Health partners have implemented continuous quality improvement processes and programs to respond to the impacts of the pandemic at the local level. Under the leadership of the Lead Agency, Core Service Providers have worked across the education, health and social services sector to develop and implement system wide strategies to monitor and respond to local challenges, improve access and manage wait times for all children, youth, and their families. Core Service Providers' establish and implement action plans to address priority areas across the continuum of services. Services span from brief and time-limited treatment to specialized assessment and consultation to in-patient and residential programs. Some examples include prioritizing the needs of racialized youth seeking mental health

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services by allocating community funding to implement YouThrive, a collaborative program designed to meet the unique needs of Black, Indigenous and/or Children of Colour. A community partnership pilot was also implemented during the pandemic to deliver low barrier mental health services at the Good Shepherd Family Centre. This pilot resulted in improved access and reduced wait times for children and families experiencing homelessness.

Challenges in wait times and access to services are not unique to the Hamilton community. In recognition of the need for change, the Ministry has recently announced a 5% base funding increase for Core Service Providers and further investments to enhance services in priority areas. More specifically, the Province has announced the implementation of One Stop Talk. This brief services program will enhance access to virtual single session counselling for all children and youth in Ontario through a virtual model of care. Additionally, the Province has recently announced the transition of funding and responsibility for Child and Youth Mental Health access and triage from contact agencies to Lead Agencies effective January 1, 2024. These changes will bring opportunities to reduce wait times, ease access and improve quality of service through a more connected system. It will enable opportunities to implement local solutions to fill gaps and mitigate risks to vulnerable infants, children, youth and their families.

The full impact of increased funding and transformation at the local level is not yet known. At the time of this report children, youth and their families referred to Child and Adolescent Services brief services are seen within eight days from the date of referral. Wait times for time-limited counselling and therapy averages between 4-6 months. There are currently 109 children and youth waiting for services with the longest wait time totalling 109 days. We anticipate wait time pressures will continue as transformation activities are underway and, as we develop a better understanding of the ongoing needs of Hamilton's children, youth, and their families as the completion of system planning and implementation continues through 2023 and 2024.

We will monitor the impact of this budget allocation on service delivery with a focused priority to mitigate potential negative impact to children and youth and staff.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Confidential Appendix "A" to Report
BOH23029

Additional Staffing Recommendation
Implications and Rationale for Report
BOH23029