




## COMMUNICATION UPDATE

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| <b>TO:</b>               | Mayor and Members<br>City Council   |
| <b>DATE:</b>             | August 30, 2023   |
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>          | Changes to Special Supports Program (City Wide)                                   |
| <b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> | City Wide   |
| <b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>     | Grace Mater<br>General Manager<br>Community Services                              |
| <b>SIGNATURE:</b>        |  |

Mayor Horwath and Councillors,

I am writing to inform you of upcoming changes effective Monday, September 11, 2023, to the provision of benefits available through both the Ontario Works and Special Supports Program. The Special Supports program provides a suite of health-related benefits to social assistance recipients and low-income individuals however the programs are experiencing budget pressures and will no longer be able to continue at the current service levels.

The following changes are necessary due to rising costs and the requirement to remain within the 2023 Council approved budget. Some of the drivers for the increased costs are a result of increased vendor prices, increased requests as medical professionals re-opened (COVID recovery), and/or harmonization of low-income eligibility across five City of Hamilton subsidy programs.

The authority to implement these changes was approved by Council in November 2012 as part of Report CS12020(b) recommendation (e): *That the General Manager of Community Services, or designate, be authorized to implement spending caps, benefit frequency limits or other controls necessary to ensure costs are contained within the approved budget amounts.*

The decision to implement these changes has not been an easy one. The Special Supports and Ontario Works staff will continue to work with any impacted individuals offering alternate resources such as the Ontario Works Emergency Assistance

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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.

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applications and/or referrals to community partners. A communication to notify health professionals and vendors will be distributed week of September 7, 2023.

Low Income Program

| Benefit   | Paused and reassessed March 2024 | No longer provided |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Hospital beds and repairs   | x                                |                    |
| Hearing Aid batteries and repairs   | x                                |                    |
| Orthotics and orthopedic footwear   |                                  | x                  |
| All Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Assistive Device Program (ADP) 25% client contribution and any additional costs above ADP's capped amounts.<br><i>Any low- income person who is currently receiving ongoing supplies will continue until they either exit the program and/or are no longer financially eligible.</i> |                                  | x                  |

Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program

| Benefit  | Paused and reassessed March 2024 | No longer provided |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Orthopaedic footwear except for those with severe foot deformity |                                  | x                  |

If you have any question please reach out to Erica Brimley at [Erica.brimley@hamilton.ca](mailto:Erica.brimley@hamilton.ca) Ext.4815 or by cell at (905) 973-0545