





Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	November 2, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Ending of Hamilton Community Foundation/GreenShield Funding for Dental Services (HSC23075/BOH23035) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Jennifer Vickers-Manzin, CNO Director, Public Health Services - Healthy Families Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Bonnie Elder Director, Ontario Works Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

This report is to inform the Emergency and Community Services Committee about the ending of the Hamilton Community Foundation, GreenShield Canada oral health program enhancement offered through Public Health Services and Ontario Works.

## INFORMATION

In 2017, GreenShield Canada invested \$6,000,000 to six communities across Canada (Six 4 Six) to advance improving oral health and mental health. In Hamilton these grant dollars were distributed through the Hamilton Community Foundation. In September 2018, the City of Hamilton received approval to accept a \$1,000,000 investment from the Hamilton Community Foundation to fund three oral health program enhancements over three years (HSC10845). This plan and funding arrangement were approved by Hamilton City Council in the fall of 2018, which included a collaboration between Ontario Works and Public Health Services to provide enhanced programming in Hamilton.

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

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In March 2020, private and public dental programs were restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some services under this program were not restarted until 2022 with each part of the program returning to pre-pandemic service levels at different times.

Throughout this period, the Hamilton Community Foundation was aware of the rationale for the program pause and agreed to extend the funding period to allow the program to re-start when provincial public health guidelines and local public health staff could support the program and services being offered. This was communicated to the Board of Health in a communication update on November 12, 2021.

The approved program included:

- Increasing one day of Dentist and Dental Assistant service on the Dental Health Bus to increase the number of clients accessing service (\$167,400 over 3 years). The Dental Health Bus provides mobile dental services to eligible adults throughout Hamilton. It was estimated that the increased staff and operational costs would support the provision of services for approximately 350 more clients per year. This target was met, the Dental Health Bus provided service to an additional 1,132 clients between February 1, 2019 and December 23, 2022;
- Implementation of a Smile with Confidence pilot program (\$318,000 over 3 years). The investment proposal included piloting a Smile with Confidence program based on a successful model developed and evaluated by The Region of Peel. Through Ontario Works, this program identified working-age adults, whose prospects of employability would benefit from dental care, including preventive and restorative care as well as dentures. By the end of 2023 the program will have served an estimated 1,304 people;
- Providing supplemental denture coverage to low income seniors (\$156,800 over 3.25 years). The original investment provided supplemental denture coverage to seniors in the community through the City of Hamilton special supports program. Between November 2018 and October 2020, 117 seniors received the supplemental denture coverage. On November 20, 2019 the Ontario Ministry of Health launched the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, which provides routine dental care to low-income seniors. Dentures and denture services are included in the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program. As a result of the introduction of the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, there was a need to reconsider use of the supplemental denture coverage funds to low income seniors. Within the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program there is a co-payment for new dentures. Co-payment can be a barrier in accessing this service for many clients. On July 16, 2021 funding was re-allocated to cover the denture co-payment for clients in the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program to ensure all those eligible can access this service. Overall, since September 2021 to August

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15, 2023, 564 seniors have had their co-payments covered by this funding. These funds will be depleted December 31, 2023; and,

- The investment plan also included \$100,000 in grant dollars for community partners and grassroots programs to enhance access to services for vulnerable populations; \$57,800 to fund evaluation to monitor the impact of investments; and, the remainder (\$200,000) was endowed with the Hamilton Community Foundation for future investment.

With the Hamilton Community Foundation approval in 2022, the evaluation and grassroots portions of the program were reallocated to Smile with Confidence to extend this program until the end of 2023. The denture co-payments will extend to the end of the 2023 year. The funding allocated for increased service on the Dental Health Bus was depleted in December 2022.

Each part of the overall program was successful in meeting the objective of increased access, improved oral health and mental health. Evaluation of the program (see Appendix "A" to Report HSC23075/BOH23035) was completed by Public Health Services' Epidemiology & Evaluation Program and highlights the tremendous positive impacts these programs had on people's lives.

The Dental Health Bus continues to serve people in the community and consequently without one dentist scheduled on Fridays means an average of seven people are not seen. The Smile with Confidence has provided dental services to improve oral health and employment opportunities and without this funding will also leave a gap. The dental program is exploring other options to cover the co-payment for seniors starting in 2024.

Public Health Services and Ontario Works are hopeful that the new Canada Federal Dental plan will fill the gaps in oral health services. The current proposed program will support oral health care for people of all ages who make less than \$90,000 per year. The full implementation of the program is expected in 2025. Staff will continue to monitor the impact on our community and report back as relevant.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix "A" to Report HSC23075/BOH23035

Evaluation of Oral Health Program Enhancements