

From: Felicia Radassao [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 3:13 PM
To: Gauthier, Matt <Matt.Gauthier@hamilton.ca>
Subject: Health Connections Lactation Consultants

Good afternoon,

I'm a Hamilton resident from Ward 4 and in January and February benefited from the City's Health Connections Lactation Consultant services. Not only was my first appointment booked quickly, but the Lactation Consultants came to my home which was absolutely incredible. When recovering from childbirth and adapting to living with a newborn, such services are critical for new mothers.

It has come to my attention that this unit had received less funding and as a result the number of staff has been reduced. Not only will those laid off staff need to find new jobs, but Hamilton residents who are new mothers may not get the care they need in time. I can tell you from first hand experience that time is of the essence when overcoming breastfeeding challenges. I won't get into why breastfeeding newborns is important, but will emphasize the importance of such services being available at no upfront cost to new mothers! Private lactation consultants are expensive and also have a huge number of clients. It is also extremely difficult to have private consultants come to the home of the new mother, and if they do there's an extra fee. Getting a family doctors referral also takes time as it can take days to secure an appointment. That may sound like "no big deal" but days can mean the difference between overcoming breastfeeding challenges with lactation support, or not.

During a time when our public health care system is constantly being underfunded across the province and the cost of living continues to increase, this news is very disappointing. I hope that the City of Hamilton and the Public Health Committee prioritizes bringing this service back to a robust state that offers timely critical lactation services to all Hamilton mothers who need it. Aggressively lobbying the Provincial Government to release more federal funds slotted for health care is a good start.

Thank you,
Felicia