



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
 Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TO:	Mayor and Members Public Health Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 3, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Budget 2024-2025 (BOH24014) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Melissa Biksa (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6709
SUBMITTED BY:	Jennifer Vickers-Manzin, CNO Director, Healthy Families Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, Healthy Babies Healthy Children program budget be approved;
- (b) That the Medical Officer of Health or delegate be authorized and directed to submit a letter to request for increased base funding of \$108,323 to cover the budget shortfall and the impact of the continued capped funding along with the 2024-2025 budget to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services;
- (c) That if the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services does not provide Public Health Services with additional funding to cover the budget shortfall then Council approve funding of \$81,242 to allow the continuation of the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program with the current staffing complement until December 31, 2024, to be funded first from any Healthy Babies Healthy Children program surplus, then from any Healthy and Safe Communities Departmental Surplus and lastly from any Corporate Surplus or any source deemed appropriate by the General Manager of Corporate Services;
- (d) That if the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services does not provide Public Health Services with additional funding to cover the budget shortfall of then staff be directed to include the annualized estimated indexed for inflation cost of \$210,000 for the program pressure resulting from capped Ministry funding and annual cost increases of staff salaries and benefits in the 2025 Tax Operating Budget submission;

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- (e) 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 2024; and,
- (f) 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 the 2024-2025 Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program budget approved in Report BOH24014.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is a mandatory public health program funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program provides targeted and universal screening both prenatally and postpartum for pregnant individuals and provides screening for children and families up to school entry. In addition to screening, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program provides intensive home visiting for infants, children, and their caregivers. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program budget also supports the operation of the Nurse-Family Partnership program in Hamilton. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program collaborates with health system partners to improve the health and well-being of children and families and has been proven as a successful upstream intervention in the prevention of adverse childhood events and improved health outcomes for children.

This report provides an outline of the 2024-2025 Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program budget for approval by the Board of Health to submit to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 6

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is intended to be 100% funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Despite yearly advocacy, there has only been one base funding increase since the program began in 1997. In the most recent Ontario provincial budget, additional funding was announced for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, however, it is not known what programs will receive this new investment. Public Health Services anticipates status quo for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program funding in 2024-2025. When submitting the 2024-2025 budget to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, a letter is being recommended to be sent to accompany the submission to continue to highlight the budget shortfall,

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the impact of the continued capped funding and to also formally request increased funding to cover the budget shortfall.

Table 1, below, outlines the proposed budget for April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025, with the previous fiscal year as a comparator.

Table 1: Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Budget Summary, April 1, 2024- March 31, 2025

	April 1, 2023- March 31, 2024	April 1, 2024- March 31, 2025	Status
Staffing and Operating Costs	\$4,334,446	\$4,429,400	2.2% increase
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Budget	\$3,533,913	\$3,533,913	No base funding increase received for 2024/2025
Levy- Cost Allocations	\$347,524	\$355,517	2.3% increase
Levy- Staffing	\$423,010	\$ 431,647	2.0% increase Approved in 2024 Tax Operating Budget.
2024/2025 Pressure		(\$108,323)**	

1. The financial data provided in this chart is reasonably accurate and complete. It is important to acknowledge that our financial systems are offline due to the ongoing Cybersecurity incident impacting the City of Hamilton. As such, minor adjustments may occur once the system is restored, and we can review the final reports.
2. ** Pressure is for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. The pressure from April 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, is \$81,242 noted in Recommendation (c) to Report BOH24014. The remaining \$27,080 pressure is from January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025, has been included in Recommendation (d) to Report BOH24014.

Public Health Services anticipates continued capped funding from the Ministry. If this capped funding continues, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is estimating a pressure of \$182,919 based on

inflationary increases in staff and operating costs from April 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. This pressure from April 1, 2025-December 31, 2025, is included in Recommendation (d) to Report BOH24014.

Over the last several years, the program has been grateful to receive an annual grant from the Hamilton Community Foundation to support the on-going work of the Nurse-Family Partnership program. Hamilton Community Foundation has notified Public Health Services that the Foundation will providing a \$40,000 grant to the Nurse-Family Partnership program in 2024. This grant will support the licensing and professional fees in the Nurse-Family Partnership program as well as community events and client incentives. Table 2, below, outlines the grant for 2024, with previous budget year as a comparator.

Table 2: Nurse Family Partnership Grant, January 1, 2024-December 31, 2024

January 1, 2023-December 31, 2023	January 1, 2024-December 1, 2024	Status
\$30,000	\$40,000	33% increase

Staffing: Not Applicable.

Legal: Public Health Services is mandated to provide all components of the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program. An annual service agreement is signed between the Province and City of Hamilton Public Health Services.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is intended to be 100% funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, however, as noted above the program has received only one increase to funding since the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program began, creating significant underfunding to the program. However, Council has recognized the value and positive impact home visiting has on pregnant individuals and young families in Hamilton and has supported the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program with funding to support continuation of program operations while the funding remains capped from the province. Annual funding is received from the Tax Supported Operating budget to support program operations, and to fund mandatory City of Hamilton cost allocations as these costs are not allowable to be submitted to the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services.

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The recommendations outlined in the report will ensure that Public Health Services is able to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards, Healthy Babies Healthy Children program protocol (2018).¹

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Finance and Administration was consulted in preparation of the budget and have approved the recommendations included in the report.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Healthy Babies Healthy Children is a mandatory public health program funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program offers targeted screening to the prenatal population in Hamilton, ensures that all individuals who give birth in Hamilton are screened postpartum, and promotes early childhood screening in the community. Families are supported through a blended home visiting program with Public Health Nurses and Family Home Visitors. Through partnership with Wesley, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program works collaboratively with families to achieve goals and help address the social determinants of health. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program also supports the Nurse Family Partnership program. First time mothers aged 24 years or younger and experiencing socio-economic disadvantage can be enrolled into the Nurse Family Partnership. This program provides support through pregnancy up to two years of life through intensive home visiting.

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program is a critical early year intervention that helps address Adverse Childhood Events in children. Adverse Childhood Events are defined as potentially traumatic experiences that occur in a child's first 18 years of life. Adverse Childhood Events are associated with poor health outcomes such as chronic disease, mental health disorders, health risk behaviours, and decreases in life expectancy.² In the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, Public Health Nurses use a number of evidence-based nursing interventions to support healthy pregnancy, birth outcomes and build parental confidence to strengthen the relationships between caregivers and children. These interventions help to buffer the impact of Adverse Childhood Events. In the 2024 Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario annual report

¹ Ontario. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Ontario public health standards: Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Protocol, 2018. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario.

² Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs): public health programs to address ACEs in Ontario. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2022.

on the impact of substance use in the province, both the Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Nurse-Family Partnership programs were highlighted as effective upstream interventions in helping to build stronger families, communities and were identified as programs that can both address social determinants of health and improve health equity.³

Public Health Services continues to experience high demands for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program. In 2023, there was an 8% increase in total screens received for home visiting. In 2023, 71% (n=4512) of the screens completed by the program were identified “with-risk”. With-risk is defined as when a Healthy Babies Healthy Children screen identifies that there is a serious likelihood that a child may not reach his or her potential and the family may benefit from intensive program services (e.g. home visiting, service coordination).⁴ The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program also had a 49% increase in completed in-depth assessments, and as a result had a 29% increase in new families being referred to long-term home visiting. In 2023, there were an additional 575 (35%) home-visits completed by Public Health Nurses.

In addition, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program continues to support health system coordination for infant and early mental health in children zero to 3.8 years of age. As part of a health-system wide pathway implemented in 2023, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program serves as the entry-point for screening children who have social and emotional developmental risks. Children and families in this pathway are supported with long-term home visiting, completion of social and emotional developmental screening, development of developmental service plans and referral to community services.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

If Recommendation (c) to Report BOH24014 is not approved, then service levels within the program would have to be adjusted. A service level decrease of 1.0 FTE Public Health Nurse would need to be reduced from the budget to stay within the budget cap. This would reduce the number of staff available to complete screening and home visiting in the community and would reduce the number of home visits completed by 320 annually.

If Recommendation (d) to Report BOH24014 is not approved, Council could consider approval of \$27,080 for funding for January 1, 2025-March 31, 2025. Further request

³ Moore K. Balancing Act: An all-of-society approach to substance use and harms. Toronto, ON: King’s Printer for Ontario; 2024. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-03/moh-cmoh-annual-report-2023-en-2024-03-28.pdf>

⁴ Ontario. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Ontario public health standards: Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Protocol, 2018. Toronto, ON: King’s Printer for Ontario.

for funding due to the program pressures from the capped funding for the 2025-2026 would then come to the 2025 Tax Operating Budget process.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.