



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:	Child and Adolescent Services Annual 2024-2025 Budget (BOH24013) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Lynn Foye (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3697
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, 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 submit a letter to request for increased base funding of \$103,931 to cover the budget shortfall and the impact of the continued capped funding along with the 2024-2025 budget to the Ministry of Health;
- (c) That if the Ministry of Health does not provide Public Health Services with additional funding to cover the budget shortfall then Council approve funding of \$77,948 to allow the continuation of the program with the current staffing complement until December 31, 2024, to be funded first from any Child and Adolescent Services 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 Health does not provide Public Health Services with additional funding to cover the budget shortfall, then staff be directed to include the annualized estimated cost indexed for inflation of \$165,000 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; and,

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.

- (e) 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 2024-2025 Child and Adolescent Services Program budget approved in Public Health Committee Report BOH24013.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 and have received verbal confirmation that the 2024-2025 budget envelope will remain the same as the 2023-2024 allocation. As Provincial funding is capped, program pressures will continue due to annual increases in salary and benefits and operational costs. To maintain within those provincial funding levels, the number of front-line staff (Clinical Therapists) who deliver the program would need to be reduced and would result in significant wait times and reduced service delivery levels.

Mental health issues are a significant concern for children and youth in Hamilton. Increasing rates of hospital emergency room visits for self-harm have been well documented at both the provincial and local level.¹ The services provided by Child and Adolescent Services are highly valued by families and can vastly improve the life trajectory of those served and help to turn the curve on mental health and well-being of children and youth in our community.

Child and Adolescent Services delivers brief and time-limited counselling and therapy in clinic and community-based settings in high priority neighbourhoods. Children and youth presenting with significant challenges are supported through specialized assessment and consultation with a psychological associate and connected with broader health and social service organizations to ensure a holistic approach and realize sustainable positive outcomes.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 5

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The Ministry of Health increased the Child and Adolescent Services Program budget by 5% in 2023-2024. While this base funding increase enabled the program to maintain clinical staffing and increase Program Secretary by 0.2 FTE the preliminary budget (April 1, 2024, to March 31,

¹ Hamilton Public Health Services. (2024) Hamilton's Community Health Status Report.

**SUBJECT: Child and Adolescent Services Annual 2024-2025 Budget (BOH24013)
(City Wide) - Page 3 of 6**

2025) indicates staffing and program costs have surpassed the increase, resulting in pressure of \$103,931 (see Table 1 below). These costs and the budget shortfall will be outlined in a letter and included in the 2024-2025 budget submission to the Ministry of Health (Recommendation (b) to Report BOH24013).

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

Budget	April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024	April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025	Status
Staffing & Operating Costs	\$2,527,974	\$2,634,845	\$106,871 increase
Ministry of Health Funding	\$2,415,118	(\$2,415,118)	No change to funding
Cost allocations - Levy	\$112,885	\$115,796	2.6% increase
2024/2025 Pressure	\$0	(\$103,931) **	Due to increases in staffing costs and program costs.

* The financial data provided in this report are reasonably accurate and complete. It is important to acknowledge that our financial systems are offline due to the 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.

** Pressure is for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. The pressure from April 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, is \$77,948 noted in Recommendation (c) to Report BOH24013. The remaining \$25,983 pressure is from January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025, has been included in Recommendation (d) to Report BOH24013.

**SUBJECT: Child and Adolescent Services Annual 2024-2025 Budget (BOH24013)
(City Wide) - Page 4 of 6**

*** Public Health Services anticipates continued capped funding from the Ministry. If this capped funding continues, the Child and Adolescent Services program is estimating a pressure based on inflationary increases from April 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, to be \$139,017. This pressure from April 1, 2025-December 31, 2025, is included in Recommendation (d) to Report BOH24013.

Staffing: Recommendations will maintain current Clinical Therapist FTE and preserve service delivery.

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

To stay within budget cap over the past several years Child and Adolescent Services has made the following FTE changes:

- **2016-2017** A 0.60 FTE receptionist and 0.24 FTE clinical therapist reduction (Report BOH16025);
- **2017-2018** A 0.22 FTE clinical therapist reduction (Report BOH17014);
- **2018-2019** A five percent base funding increase enabled the program to maintain clinical therapist FTE and increase 0.46 FTE clinical therapist (Report BOH18024);
- **2019-2020** A decrease of 0.17 clinical therapist FTE (Report BOH19036);
- **2020-2021** Staffing levels and permanent 17.39 FTE staff maintained;
- **2021-2022** A five percent base funding increase enabled the program to maintain permanent staff and increase 0.61 Clinical Therapist FTE;
- **2022-2023** Staffing levels and permanent 18.0 FTE staff maintained; and,
- **2023-2024** A five percent base funding increase enabled the program to maintain clinical therapist FTE and increase 0.20 Program Secretary FTE.

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 and provided review of included financial figures.

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. 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 number of families Child and Adolescent Services supports each year is variable and dependent on several factors such as: the number of families referred; the length of time each family requires services; staffing levels and the length of wait for services. Continuous quality improvement efforts enable us to achieve small gains to maintain service levels and enhance access for those who are vulnerable. For example, in 2023 we enhanced onsite service provision through Good Shepherd Centre to increase access to play based group therapy for young children and their families experiencing homelessness. Additionally, we have enhanced our Brief Services model to ease access for vulnerable children, youth, and their families by partnering with Neighbour to Neighbour to deliver on-site access to a clinical therapist at their community food centre.

We will monitor 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

If Recommendations (c) to Report BOH24013 is not approved, then service levels within the program would have to be adjusted. A service level decrease of 1.0 FTE Clinical Therapist would need to be reduced from the budget to stay within the budget cap. This would reduce the number of clinical staff available to provide child and youth mental health counselling by 1,092 direct service hours annually. Wait times for an initial assessment and wait times for counselling and therapy services will continue to increase and fewer families will be prioritized for counselling and therapy services.

If Recommendation (d) to Report BOH24013 is not approved, Council could consider approval of \$25,983 for funding for January 1, 2025- March 31, 2025. Further request for funding due to the program pressures from the capped funding for the 2025-2026 would then come to the 2025 Tax Operating Budget for consideration.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.