

For Information

DATE: December 4, 2012

REPORT TITLE: **UPDATE ON THE REGION OF PEEL SENIORS' LOW-INCOME DENTAL PROGRAM**FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services  
David L. Mowat, MBChB, MPH, FRCPC, Medical Officer of Health**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the Seniors' Dental Program Stakeholders meeting.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Stakeholders met on October 4, 2012 to continue dialogue on meeting the oral health needs of low-income seniors in Peel.
- The enhanced eligibility screening has decreased the size of the program waitlist and focused the program on those seniors in the most financial need.
- Beginning in January 2013, the dental clinics at the Bramalea and East Mississauga Community Health Centres will receive funding through the Region of Peel Seniors' Low-Income Dental Program to treat eligible seniors.
- Community dentists will continue to be funded to treat eligible seniors through the fee for service delivery model.

**DISCUSSION****1. Background**

The Region of Peel Seniors' Low-Income Dental program is a one time needs-based program with a set of eligible procedures that is open to all Peel residents 65 years and older who have proof of legal residence in Canada, who do not have dental insurance and whose income falls at or below the Low-Income Cut Off (LICO) as established by Statistics Canada. Specifically, the 2011 low-income limits released by Statistics Canada in June 2012 are \$19,307 for a one-person household and \$23,498 for a two-person household. The program's annual budget of \$1.3 million is 100 per cent Regionally funded. The budget has been used to pay fees for work performed by dentists.

In September 2011, an initial Seniors' Dental Stakeholders meeting was held at Council's direction (2011-462) to gain input on maximizing the care that can be delivered to the greatest number of qualifying seniors. This meeting led to the recommendations to enhance the eligibility screening for the program. A second stakeholders meeting was held on

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October 4, 2012 to provide an update on the impact of the enhanced eligibility screening and continue dialogue on meeting the oral health needs of low-income seniors in Peel.

### **2. Update on the Seniors' Dental Stakeholders Meeting – October 4, 2012**

Peel Public Health staff hosted a meeting on October 4, 2012 to provide an update on the Seniors Dental Program to the dentists, denturists, hygienists and other stakeholders who attended the September 30, 2011 stakeholder meeting. The Regional Chair, the Chair and Vice Chair of Health Services and Councillor Mahoney were also in attendance.

Staff presented an update on the impact of the enhanced eligibility screening criteria which was previously shared with Council on July 5, 2012. The enhanced eligibility screening has slowed the growth of the existing waitlist and focused the program on those in most financial need.

Staff also shared Council's direction (Resolution 2012-891) to fund the dental clinics at the Bramalea Community Health Centre and the East Mississauga Community Health Centre to treat eligible seniors through the Peel Seniors Low-Income Dental Program. Community dentists will continue to be funded to treat eligible seniors through the fee for service delivery model. The goal is to provide dental care to 1,100 seniors with this combined service model in 2013.

Some of the stakeholders noted that the July 5, 2012 Council report entitled 'Update on the Region of Peel Seniors' Low-Income Dental Program', (HE-C4), was not explicit in acknowledging that the Community Health Centres received capital and operational funding through the Healthy Smiles Program and that this capital investment would be leveraged in support of providing dental services to eligible seniors. Further, that the dental fees paid to community dentists through the program would encompass office expenses while the proposed operational funds for the Community Health Centres would be allocated to professional dental staff specifically for the Seniors Dental program, resulting in an inequitable comparison.

Appreciation was expressed for the contributions of dental providers in the Region. Many dental providers offer seniors reduced rates, payment plans and pro bono treatment. This extends oral health services to seniors and families beyond the reach of the publicly funded dental programs.

It was agreed that these stakeholders meetings should be held annually. The minutes of the meetings have been attached as Appendix I.

### **3. Update on the Seniors' Low-Income Dental Program**

Since 2008, over 6,200 seniors have received dental care through the Seniors' Low-Income Dental Program. There are currently 2,467 seniors on the waitlist as compared to 5,627 in October 2011 before the use of the Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut Off (LICO) to determine eligibility. Approximately 16 seniors are added to the waitlist each week. With the budget of \$1.3 million in 2013, the goal is to provide dental care to 1,100 seniors.

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**CONCLUSION**

Program staff, in partnership with community stakeholders continues to explore ways of meeting the oral health needs of low income seniors in Peel. The annual stakeholder meetings provide a forum for continued dialogue on how to maximize oral health care for eligible seniors.



Janette Smith  
Commissioner of Health Services



David L. Mowat, MBChB, MPH, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

**Approved for Submission:**



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D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

*For further information regarding this report, please contact Cathy Granger at extension 2000 or via email at [cathy.granger@peelregion.ca](mailto:cathy.granger@peelregion.ca)*

c. Legislative Services

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SENIORS' DENTAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING  
OCTOBER 4, 2012 9:00 – 11:00 AM  
10 PEEL CENTRE DRIVE, MISSISSAUGA ROOM

Minutes

- Present: Region of Peel: Councillor Elaine Moore (Chair), Councillor Richard Paterak, Councillor Katie Mahoney, Regional Chair Emil Kolb, Janette Smith, Dr. Eileen de Villa, Cathy Granger, Pat Bromby, Diane Vineham (Recorder)  
Denturist Association of Ontario: Brian Carr  
Halton Peel Dental Association: Dr. Steve Lipinski  
East Mississauga Community Health Centre: Lorraine Telford  
Mississauga/Halton LHIN: Liane Fernandes  
Bramalea Community Health Centre: Mayo Hawco, Pat Caufin  
Ontario Dental Association: Frank Bevilacqua  
Peel Poverty Action Group: Edna Toth
- Regrets: Central West LHIN, Peel Senior Link, South Asian Dental Association, College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario.

Key Issues Raised/Discussed:

	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
1.	Welcome and Introductions	<p>Councillor Elaine Moore welcomed all to the meeting.</p> <p>The objective of the meeting is to provide an update on the implementation of the enhanced eligibility criteria for the Seniors Dental Program (SDP).</p> <p>It was noted that the SDP continues to be a Regionally funded program, with a budget of \$1.3 million.</p> <p>The goal of the program is to restore basic dental function to seniors and to contribute to their overall health.</p> <p>Councillor Moore acknowledged the challenges that staff have in balancing stakeholder input and ensuring recommendations are shared with Council before sharing them with stakeholder groups.</p>
2.	Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sept. 30, 2011 meeting minutes</li> <li>• Oct. 27, 2011 Council Report</li> </ul>	<p>Janette Smith provided the background on the Region of Peel Seniors' Low-Income Dental Program (SDP) leading up to this meeting.</p> <p>The guiding principles of the program are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To improve overall health</li> <li>2. To serve as many eligible seniors as possible</li> <li>3. To maximize efficiencies in the program (i.e. minimize administrative costs)</li> <li>4. To deliver a high standard of customer service, aligned with the Region of Peel's Service Commitment</li> </ol>


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	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
		<p>In reflecting on the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Stakeholders meeting, she noted that there were varied perspectives on how to best address the program's waitlist and maximize efficiencies in the program. One area of consensus was the need to enhance the eligibility screening process.</p> <p>The October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011 Council Report reported back on the outcome of the September 30<sup>th</sup> Stakeholders meeting. The minutes from the meeting were included as an appendix to the council report. The report also outlined an enhanced eligibility criteria process to be used to decrease the SDP waitlist. Council approved the report and recommendations.</p>
3.	<p>Implementation and Impact of the enhanced eligibility criteria</p>	<p>Pat Bromby provided a handout summarizing the impact of the enhanced eligibility criteria (attached).</p>  <p>Oct 4, 2012 riefing Note.doc .</p> <p>To be eligible for the program the senior is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be 65 years or older</li> <li>• be a Canadian citizen or legal resident</li> <li>• live in the Region of Peel</li> <li>• have an income at or below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) as established by Statistics Canada.</li> <li>• have had no previous dental treatment through the Seniors Dental program</li> <li>• have no other form of dental coverage</li> </ul> <p>Seniors are required to provide documentation to confirm their eligibility.</p> <p>With the implementation of the enhanced eligibility criteria, the number of seniors being added to the waitlist has dropped from 60 seniors/ week to 18 seniors/ week.</p> <p>Over 3500 seniors have responded to the letters informing them of the enhanced eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Through this process, 937 of the responding seniors have not met the enhanced eligibility criteria. These seniors are experiencing financial hardship as well, albeit not to the same extent as those at or below the LICO.</p>

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	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
	<p>Dr. Lipinski</p> <p>Councillor Richard Paterak</p>	<p>The waitlist, as of September 21<sup>st</sup>, is 2,719 seniors. This has decreased significantly from the 5,627 seniors on the waitlist in October 2011.</p> <p>Dr. Lipinski was encouraged by the decrease in waitlist numbers</p> <p>Councillor Paterak asked if a breakdown could be done to show how many seniors were from single income households versus two income households. Pat explained that seniors from single income households were more likely to be eligible than seniors from two income households. There is limited data based on the face to face document verification sessions. The availability of this data could be explored further.</p> <p>Comments made regarding the nature of these face to face meetings noted the potential of these becoming heated if a client is declined. Pat acknowledged that this does occur and staff have been able to diffuse the situation with tact and diplomacy, supported by Senior Management as needed.</p>
4.	<p>Seniors' Dental Program Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Report July 5, 2012</li> <li>• Collaboration with the Community Health Centres</li> </ul>	<p>Cathy Granger noted that the SDP currently operates with 1 full time staff and a contract admin support person to assist with implementing the enhanced eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Although the enhanced eligibility criteria have had a positive impact on the waitlist, staff continue to explore opportunities to maximize the number of seniors who can benefit from the program.</p> <p>Cathy Granger explained that in 2010 the Province launched the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program in Ontario. Capital budget was provided by the province to build two dental clinics, one in each of the Community Health Centres (CHCs). The Bramalea Community Health Centre Dental Clinic opened in September 2011 and the East Mississauga Community Health Centre Dental Clinic opened in February 2012.</p> <p>On July 5, 2012, Regional Council was presented a report summarizing the impact of implementing the enhanced eligibility criteria. The Council Report also outlined the recommendation of funding the two Community Health Centre Dental Clinics in Peel to provide oral health treatment to seniors who are eligible through the Peel Seniors Dental Program. The remainder of the funds, approximately \$5 million would continue to be directed to</p>

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AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
Mayo Hawco	<p>community dentists through the fee for service model. This will increase the number of seniors who can be treated with the existing budget.</p> <p>Ms. Hawco further explained that the Province provides funding through the health unit to the CHCs for dental care services to eligible children 0 – 17 years of age. The Community Health Centres provide the clinical space and staff to assess and treat these eligible clients.</p> <p>Pat Bromby shared that staff met with the two CHC directors to work out if and how seniors could be serviced through the CHC locations. By leveraging the existing investment in the CHCs, the additional funding to treat seniors at the CHCs would allow more eligible seniors to receive oral health care with the existing funds.</p> <p>Councillor Moore reminded all that the SDP is not a mandated program by the Province and that Regional Council took this on to support seniors in Peel.</p>
Frank Bevilacqua	<p>Mr. Bevilacqua expressed his concern that the number of seniors served with the fee for service model compared to the CHC model cited in the Council Report was not an accurate comparison. It was comparing 'apples to oranges'. He noted that the council report was not explicit in acknowledging that the CHC costs did not include the overhead costs that were already accounted for with the HSO funding. The comparison in the July 5, 2012 Council Report should clarify that the costs of service are treatment costs only.</p>
Dr. Steve Lipinski	<p>Dr. Lipinski expressed similar concerns. He also inquired why staff did not go to stakeholders prior to Council with the new proposal.</p>
Regional Chair Emil Kolb	<p>Regional Chair Emil Kolb explained that agendas and reports are available to the public on the Friday prior to the Council meeting and that the minutes of Council Meetings are made available to the public within the next week following the meeting.</p> <p>Chair Kolb also noted that the Region routinely looks for opportunities to stretch the Region's budget by leveraging existing investments.</p>
Janette Smith	<p>Janette Smith clarified that the model using the CHC buildings allow the Region to maximize available Provincial dollars to be able to service more senior clients.</p> <p>Janette also recognized that there are many dental</p>

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	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
	<p>Councillor Elaine Moore</p> <p>Dr. Eileen deVilla</p> <p>Janette Smith</p> <p>Councillor Richard Paterak</p> <p>Dr. Steve Lipinski</p>	<p>providers in Peel who offer seniors reduced rates, payment plans and pro-bono work.</p> <p>Councillor Moore stated that the figures used in the table outline services using Provincial dollars and do not include the full costs of running the office.</p> <p>Eileen compared this to the costs that dentists have for running their own offices.</p> <p>Janette acknowledged that the figures cited in the July 5<sup>th</sup> Council Report could be misinterpreted and offered to clarify this in a subsequent Council Report.</p> <p>Councillor Paterak suggested that the stakeholders be informed of upcoming Reports to Council when they are made public with the meeting agenda.</p> <p>Dr. Lipinski asked if the seniors will be given a choice as to where they can obtain service or whether they have to go through the CHC. Janette confirmed that seniors will have the option to obtain service through one of the CHCs or a community dentist of their own choice.</p>
5.	Regional Chair Emil Kolb - Fluoridation	<p>Regional Chair Kolb emphasized the need for Peel to continue to pursue support for water fluoridation. He noted that although Council unanimously supported water fluoridation, there is mounting pressure in neighboring municipalities and from interest groups in Peel to reopen the issue. It will require 2/3 vote of Council to reopen the debate.</p> <p>Frank Bevilacqua and Dr. Lipinski noted that dental caries would rise dramatically if the fluoridation ceased.</p> <p>Frank Bevilacqua offered to provide a letter of support from the ODA.</p> <p>Dr. Steve Lipinski will also provide a letter of support on behalf of the HPDA.</p>
6.	<p>Other Comments and Questions</p> <p>Edna Toth</p> <p>Frank Bevilacqua</p>	<p>Ms. Toth suggested that representation from dental clinics offered through the labour groups be invited to these stakeholder meetings and that staff explore additional services for seniors in need of dental care through these groups.</p> <p>Mr. Bevilacqua wanted to ensure that the group is aware that the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) designs dental plans in a modular fashion which can be adjusted to suit</p>



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	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
	<p>Lorraine Telford</p> <p>Dr. Brian Carr</p> <p>Pat Caufin</p>	<p>the different needs and budgets for programs. This continues to be the direction that he recommends for the SDP.                      Mr. Lipinski supports this approach as well.</p> <p>Ms. Telford stated that the Community Health Centres are committed to the success of the Seniors' Dental Program and that working together with all the stakeholders is a positive step forward.</p> <p>Dr. Lipinski agreed that teamwork is the key to success.</p> <p>Dr. Carr asked how the HSO program worked in the CHCs and whether screening was provided or could be provided related to dentures for seniors.                      Dr. Carr brought forward his past recommendation to ensure that clients are assessed for dentures on the basis of need as opposed to want.                      Due to the one time funding in this program, clients may feel entitled to "new" dentures but may only require repair of existing dentures.                      Dentures make up a large portion of the costs. He recommends having a dentist or denturist on site to provide the necessary assessments of needs versus wants. He noted that providing services 'in house' will save on costs. He also asked if there was any data on the comparison between new dentures and repairs to existing dentures.</p> <p>Ms. Caufin did not know if there was available data to state how many new dentures were provided compared to ones that were repaired but could work with Regional staff to look at the numbers.</p>
7.	Adjournment and Next Steps	<p>Councillor Moore thanked everyone for their time and contributions. She stated that staff will continue to review the program for opportunities to improve service.                      All members were in agreement to have another meeting in 2013 to provide updates.</p> <p><b>Next steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regional staff to report to Council in January or February 2013 to share Stakeholder Meeting highlights and provide clarification of the July 5, 2012 Council Report, specifically the comparison between fee for service and CHC numbers, noting that provincial dollars invested for the HSO program were further leveraged to offer services to seniors.</li> </ol>

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	AGENDA ITEM	DETAILS
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. ODA will try and send information estimating the additional support provided by Dentists to seniors in need of dental care (i.e., pro bono work, reduced rates, flexible payment plans etc.), so that it can be recognized in the Council Report.</li><li>3. Stakeholders will be provided with the report when it is made public with the agenda prior to being presented to Council.</li><li>4. Regional staff will investigate how to screen and reinforce repairing dentures instead of replacement dentures.</li><li>5. Regional staff will investigate Labour Groups running dental clinics and invite a representative to attend the 2013 meeting.</li><li>6. ODA and HPDA will provide Regional Chair Kolb with letters of support for water fluoridation.</li></ol>

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Peel Region Seniors Dental Program Stakeholders Meeting – October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
Briefing Note

**Purpose of the Meeting:**

To provide information on the impact of the enhanced eligibility criteria as approved by Council on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (Resolution 2011-1088) and discuss other updates on the Seniors Dental Program.

**Goal of the Program:**

To restore basic function of seniors' dental health to contribute to their overall health.

**Eligibility Criteria as of October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

The Peel Region Seniors Dental Program is a one time, needs based program for Peel residents 65 years and older who are low income and have no other form of dental coverage. The program's annual budget is \$1.3, which includes 1 FTE of staffing. To be eligible for the program, seniors need to meet the following criteria:

- be 65 years or older
- be a Canadian citizen or legal resident
- live in the Region of Peel
- have an income at or below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) as established by Statistics Canada.
- have had no previous dental treatment through the Seniors Dental program
- have no other form of dental coverage.

The 2011 LICO for a 1 person household is \$19,307 and for a two person household it is \$23,498. Seniors are required to bring their documentation and Notice of Tax Assessment to an eligibility screening appointment prior to being admitted into the program.

With the enhanced eligibility criteria, the number of seniors being added to the waitlist has dropped from 60 seniors/ week to 18 seniors/ week.

**Changes to the Waitlist:**

Original waitlist before the enhanced screening (October 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2011)	5,627 seniors
Waitlist as of September 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2012, seniors who meet the criteria (existing and new seniors)	2719 seniors
Number of seniors from original waitlist who have not responded to the letter to confirm income levels	2,099 seniors
Number of seniors who responded to the letter to confirm income levels and are not eligible	937 seniors
Number of seniors removed from the waitlist and seeking treatment through the program	439 seniors

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The responses from the Seniors who were not eligible indicate that these seniors are experiencing financial hardship as well, albeit, not to the same extent as those at or below the LICO as established by Statistics Canada.

Amount of Income Exceeding LICO	Count of Applicant Status
> \$1-999	51
> \$1000-2000	127
> \$2001-3000	144
> \$3001-4000	165
> \$4001-8000	183
> \$8000	202
Not eligible for other reasons	65

**Changes to the program resulting from the July 5<sup>th</sup> Council decision**

The July 5<sup>th</sup> Council Report titled "Update on the Region of Peel Seniors' Low Income Dental Program" updated Council on the impact of the enhanced eligibility criteria. It also provided several options for the program with the recommendation of building on the new partnerships with Bramalea Community Health Centre and the East Mississauga Community Health Centre dental clinics.

Approximately twice as many seniors could receive dental treatment utilizing a portion of the existing budget through a Community Health Centre service delivery model of care compared to the current fee for service model only.

Council approved the option of providing funding from the Seniors Dental Low Income budget to each of the two Community Health Centre Dental Clinics to cover the treatment costs of oral health care for seniors who are eligible for the Seniors' Low Income Dental Program. The remaining budget would be used to fund fee for service treatments through community dentists.