

July 28, 2009

Joint Services Steering Committee
Attention: Nancy Wright-Laking, City Clerk
City of Peterborough
178 Charlotte St, PO Box 4138
Peterborough, ON
K9J 8S1

Dear Ms. Wright-Laking:

I am writing to advise that the Board of Health for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit (PCCHU) has endorsed a recommendation related to the Ontario Works (OW) Adult Discretionary Dental Program administered by the Board on behalf of the municipality:

THAT the Joint Services Committee undertake a study of the feasibility of funding an alternate model of care, i.e. a dental clinic staffed by salaried providers, to increase capacity, realize efficiencies, improve service and contain costs.

This motion resulted from the Board's discussion of a staff report noting increasing expenditures in the Ontario Works Adult Discretionary Dental Program.

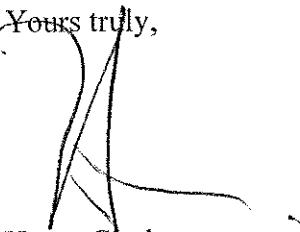
Studies have shown dental disease to be one of the most prevalent and debilitating of all chronic diseases, with most of the social and economic burdens borne by those on social assistance and the working poor. The Board recognizes that the provision of funding for dental services is a significant expenditure. In 2008, Peterborough Social Services funded dental treatment for over 1300 adults receiving benefits at a cost of over \$500,000. In addition, about \$170,000 was spent for the denture program and \$180,000 for the mandatory Ontario Works dental program for children.

The Board of Health strongly urges Council not to limit or cut dental services in order to contain treatment costs, but rather to explore all possible options for maintaining Ontario Works dental benefits as presently structured. Provision of dental services through publicly-funded dental clinics is an option currently available to low-income residents in five municipalities in Ontario: Hamilton; London; Ottawa; Toronto; and Waterloo. A publicly-funded dental clinic could meet the clinical needs of a significant portion of local Ontario Works recipients - adults and children. Whether such a clinic would be a feasible means of funding eligible services locally is unknown, but successes in other jurisdictions indicate a need for further investigation of this option.

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The Peterborough County-City Health Unit would be pleased to contribute expert advice should Peterborough City Council and the Social Services Department wish to study the option of a publicly-funded dental clinic for recipients of Ontario Works.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry Clarke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Henry Clarke
Chair, Board of Health
for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit