



October 24, 2016

Mr. Denis Kelly, Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Kelly:

RE: EXPANSION OF PROVINCIAL PUBLICLY FUNDED DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS WITH LOW INCOMES

I write to advise you that Vaughan Council at its meeting held on October 19, 2016, adopted the following resolution:

***Whereas**, oral health is essential to maintaining overall health; and*

***Whereas**, in Canadian public policy the care of our lips, tongues and throats is fully covered by public funding, but not our teeth and gums; and*

***Whereas**, a mounting body of evidence shows a link between poor oral health and diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and Alzheimer's disease; and*

***Whereas**, untreated tooth decay, gum disease and tooth loss results in social and psychological suffering and interferes with employment opportunities; and*

***Whereas**, between two to three million Ontarians have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers or antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;*

***Whereas**, almost a third of Canadians have neither public nor private insurance to help them pay for the care of their teeth and gums; and*

***Whereas**, access to oral health care should not be limited to people with private health insurance or who can afford to pay out of pocket; and*

***Whereas**, Ontario's reform of the health care system should include oral health care so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental services they need to be healthy; and*

***Whereas**, Ontario only has public dental programs for low income children, and no public programs for low income adults and seniors; and*

***Whereas**, local Ontario Works (OW) recipients are eligible for limited discretionary coverage for emergency treatment only and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients are eligible for basic dental care and limited discretionary coverage for dentures;*

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Mr. Denis Kelly, Regional Clerk
The Regional Municipality of York
Page 2
October 24, 2016

It is therefore recommended:

1. *That council of the City of Vaughan endorses the importance of oral health and requests that the Premier of Ontario include oral health as part of the government's primary care transformation initiatives, and further*
2. *That Council calls on the provincial government to expand public oral health programs with prime consideration for low income adults and seniors, and further*
3. *That Council forwards copies of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Local Members of Provincial Parliament, York Region municipalities, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario*

Attached for your information is **Item 19, Report No. 34**, of the Committee of the Whole regarding this matter.

To assist us in responding to inquiries, please quote the item and report number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara A. McEwan'.

Barbara A. McEwan
Deputy City Clerk

Attachment:

Extract
Power Point Presentation prepared by Bridge Community Health Centre (Fort Erie and Port Colbourne/ Wainfleet) on "Expanding Provincial Publicly-funded Dental Health Programs to Include Adults and Seniors with Low Incomes"

BAM/as

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 19, 2016

Item 19, Report No. 34, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 19, 2016.

**19 EXPANSION OF PROVINCIAL PUBLICLY FUNDED DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS
FOR ADULTS WITH LOW INCOMES**

The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendation contained in the following resolution submitted by Councillor Carella, dated October 5, 2016:

Member's Resolution

Submitted by Councillor Tony Carella.

Whereas, oral health is essential to maintaining overall health; and

Whereas, in Canadian public policy the care of our lips, tongues and throats is fully covered by public funding, but not our teeth and gums; and

Whereas, a mounting body of evidence shows a link between poor oral health and diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and Alzheimer's disease; and

Whereas, untreated tooth decay, gum disease and tooth loss results in social and psychological suffering and interferes with employment opportunities; and

Whereas, between two to three million Ontarians have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers or antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

Whereas, almost a third of Canadians have neither public nor private insurance to help them pay for the care of their teeth and gums; and

Whereas, access to oral health care should not be limited to people with private health insurance or who can afford to pay out of pocket; and

Whereas, Ontario's reform of the health care system should include oral health care so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental services they need to be healthy; and

Whereas, Ontario only has public dental programs for low income children, and no public programs for low income adults and seniors; and

Whereas, local Ontario Works (OW) recipients are eligible for limited discretionary coverage for emergency treatment only and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients are eligible for basic dental care and limited discretionary coverage for dentures;

It is therefore recommended:

1. That council of the City of Vaughan endorses the importance of oral health and requests that the Premier of Ontario include oral health as part of the government's primary care transformation initiatives, and further

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 19, 2016

Item 19, CW Report No. 34 – Page 2

2. That Council calls on the provincial government to expand public oral health programs with prime consideration for low income adults and seniors, and further
3. That Council forwards copies of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Local Members of Provincial Parliament, York Region municipalities, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario

Attachment

Power Point Presentation prepared by Bridge Community Health Centre (Fort Erie and Port Colbourne/ Wainfleet) on "Expanding Provincial Publicly-funded Dental Health Programs to Include Adults and Seniors with Low Incomes"

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)



Bridges

Community Health Centre

Fort Erie and Port Colborne/Wainfleet

**Expanding Provincial Publicly-funded
Dental Health Programs to Include Adults
and Seniors with Low Incomes**

A Snapshot of Dental Health Policy

- **Canadian Medicare includes the care of our lips, tongues and throats, but not our teeth and gums**
- **Dental care was excluded from Medicare primarily for three reasons:**
 - **Belief that caring for your teeth was a personal responsibility**
 - **Cavities were in decline and fluoride was seen as an alternative to large-scale treatment**
 - **Dentists at the time were against government control of their profession**
- **Dental care in Canada is almost wholly privately financed, with 51% paid through employment-based insurance and 44% through out-of-pocket expenditures; the remaining 5% of national dental care expenditures are for publicly-funded programs**
- **Ontario spends the least of all provinces on public dental care expenditures at just 1.3% of total dental care expenditures**

A Patchwork of Publicly-funded, Subsidized and Charitable Dental Health Programs across Niagara

- **Healthy Smiles (children 17 and under)**
- **Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)**
- **Ontario Works (OW)**
- **First Nation and Inuit**
- **Veterans**
- **Niagara College**
- **Trillium College**
- **Gift from the Heart (charity)**
- **Brushed Aside (loan program)**
- **Quest Community Health Centre**
- **Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara**

Consequences of Inadequate Access to Dental Care

- **Two to three million Ontarians have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services**
- **Approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario presents at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers or antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem**
- **In 2015, there were over 2,300 visits to Niagara Health System emergency rooms for patients presenting with tooth pain or infection; this is up three per cent since 2012**

The Impact on Working Age Adults

- **One third of workers in Ontario do not receive employer-provided medical or dental health benefits**
- **People with low earnings have lower levels of employer-provided health benefit coverage than those with higher earnings, with fewer than one in five people earning less than \$10,000/year receiving benefits through their employer compared with more than 90 per cent of people earning over \$100,000/year**

The Impact on Seniors

- **People who have dental coverage through employment benefits often lose coverage at retirement**
- **Seniors then have to pay to get regular dental check-ups, cleanings, and maintenance**
- **This may lead to financial burden, and problems for oral and overall health if neglected due to inability to pay**
- **For example, poor oral hygiene in older adults is a major risk for pneumonia**
- **Our aging population is increasing steadily, so lack of access to oral health care for seniors will affect more and more of us**

Our Mouths Are Not Separate From Our Bodies

- **Oral health is essential to maintaining overall health**
- **Evidence clearly shows a link between poor oral health and diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and Alzheimer's disease**
- **Untreated tooth decay, gum disease and tooth loss often results in difficulty eating, psychological suffering, low self esteem, social isolation, and can interfere with employment opportunities**

Our Mouths Are Not Separate From Our Bodies

- **Access to oral health care should not be limited to people with private health insurance or who can afford to pay out of pocket**
- **Ontario's reform of the health care system should include oral health care so that vulnerable people in our communities can have equitable access to the dental service they need to be healthy**



**Why are they living with
pain and infection?**



- **Research shows people with the highest level of dental disease experience the greatest barriers getting care**
- **Private sector dentistry is providing good quality oral health care for a majority of Canadians, but it is not working for vulnerable groups like low income working adults, low income seniors, and residents of long-term care homes who suffer the highest levels of oral health problems**

Our Ask

- **Strongly endorse the importance of oral health and request the Premier of Ontario include oral health as part of the government's primary care transformation initiatives**
- **Call on the provincial government to expand public oral health programs with prime consideration for low income adults and seniors**
- **Forward copies of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Health and Long-term Care, Local Members of Provincial Parliament, Member Municipalities, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario**