



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

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MIDDLESEX-LONDON 2013/2014 SCHOOL-BASED DENTAL SCREENING RESULTS

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 022-15 Middlesex-London 2013/2014 School-based Dental Screening Results be received for information.

Key Points

- During the 2013-2014 school year, the Health Unit screened 15,797 students (84%) in 129 elementary schools through the school-based dental screening program.
- The percentage of students screened in Junior Kindergarten who were *caries-free* (i.e., have not had cavities, or the removal or filling of a tooth because of tooth decay) was 80%. The percentage of caries-free students in Grade 2 was 57%. These percentages are slightly lower than the previous school year.
- Similar to the previous year, 632 students (4%) were found to have urgent dental needs which made them clinically eligible to receive Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) funding for their dental care.
- In response to the declining caries-free rate as students move from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2, the Health Unit is implementing a pilot fluoride varnish program in up to eight “High Intensity” schools.

Background

One hundred and twenty-nine elementary schools participated in the school-based dental screening program in the 2013-2014 school year. Students in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 at elementary schools were screened in accordance with the Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol of the OPHS. This screening involves a Registered Dental Hygienist looking in each child’s mouth to assess their past history of dental caries and whether any teeth need urgent attention. The need for and urgency of dental care is recorded and parents advised of the required follow-up. Based on each school’s Grade 2 screening results, each school is categorized into “Low”, “Medium”, or “High” levels of screening intensity, as per the Protocol. Increased screening intensity level requires that additional grades be screened.

Results of the 2013-2014 School Year Screening

Participation. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care reported that 722,425 students in Ontario were offered dental screening during the 2013-2014 school year. The actual number of children screened was 641,138 (89%). Of the 18,902 students who were offered dental screening at the schools that participated in the school-based dental screening program, in London and Middlesex County, 15,797 (84%) were screened (Figure 1, Appendix A). The numbers of students screened in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 were 3,841, 4,072, and 3,906.

The provincial percentages of students excluded from screening for consent reasons and absenteeism were 5% and 6% respectively for the 2013-2014 school year. Within Middlesex-London, the Health Unit did not have parental consent to screen 1,928 (10%) students and 1,177 (6%) students were absent on the day(s) that staff were screening at their schools. The percentage of absent and excluded students in the 2013-2014 school year was lower than the previous year’s percentages which were 12% and 7% respectively.

Screening intensity. Among the 125 elementary schools with Grade 2 in the Health Unit's jurisdiction, 98 were categorized as Low intensity, 13 as Medium intensity, and 14 as High intensity as per the Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol.

Dental caries. The percentages of Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 students screened who were caries-free, (i.e., have never had cavities, or the removal or filling of a tooth because of tooth decay) were 80%, 70%, and 57%, respectively (Figure 3, Appendix A). This demonstrated a decrease from the percentages from the previous school year which were 81%, 72%, and 60% respectively. Almost 6% of Grade 2 students screened had two or more teeth with tooth decay (Figure 4, Appendix A).

Urgent dental needs. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care reported that 40,552 students (6%) among those screened in Ontario were found to have Urgent dental needs which deemed them clinical eligible to receive Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) funding for their dental care. In London and Middlesex County, 632 students (4%) of those screened were found to have Urgent dental needs which deemed them clinically eligible to receive Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) funding for their dental care (Figure 5). Five hundred and seventy-eight students (92%) of those found to have Urgent dental needs were referred to and accepted at local dental offices for treatment. These percentages are similar to the findings and outcomes from the previous school year.

These findings are outlined more fully in the Annual Oral Health Report ([Appendix A](#)).

Next Steps

Findings from the 2013/2014 school-based dental screening program as outlined in the "Annual Oral Health Report" ([Appendix A](#)) will be shared with local dental and healthcare providers, partner agencies, and the general public. The Health Unit is currently working to improve the percentage of eligible students screened by implementing strategies such as working with the school staff to revise the consent forms and consent collection processes (within an active consent framework), and more actively promoting the school-based screening program. In response to the declining caries-free rate as students move from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 2, the Health Unit is working to implement a pilot fluoride varnish program in up to eight "High Intensity" schools.

This report was prepared by Dr. Maria van Harten, Dental Consultant and Mr. Chimere Okoronkwo, Manager, Oral Health Team.



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