



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

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## MIDDLESEX-LONDON 2014/2015 SCHOOL-BASED DENTAL SCREENING RESULTS

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 63-15 re Middlesex-London 2014/2015 School-based Dental Screening Results be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- During the 2014-2015 school year, the Health Unit screened 16,171 students (83%) in 128 elementary schools through the school-based dental screening program.
- The percentage of students screened in Junior Kindergarten who were caries-free was 78% (decrease of 2% from last year). The percentage of caries-free students in Grade 2 was 59% (same as last year).
- Similar to the previous year, 654 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.
- The Health Unit continues to work on strategies to improve oral health outcomes among children in the community, to identify children at risk of poor outcomes, and to increase participation in the school-based dental screening program.

### **Background**

One hundred and twenty-eight (128) elementary schools participated in the school-based dental screening program in the 2014-2015 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 Ontario Public Health Standards. This screening involves a Registered Dental Hygienist looking in each child's mouth to assess their past history of dental and whether any teeth need urgent attention. The need for and urgency of dental care is recorded and the parents advised of the required follow-up. Based on the screening results of the Grade 2 students at each school, the school is categorized as having "Low", "Medium", or "High" rates of dental problems, as per the Protocol. Increased screening intensity level requires that additional grades be screened.

### **Results of the 2014-2015 School Year Screening**

**Participation.** Of the 19,535 students who were offered dental screening at the schools that participated in the school-based dental screening program, 16,171 (83%) were screened (Figure 1). For the 2014-2015 school year, the Health Unit did not have parental consent to screen 2,190 (11%) students and 1,211 (6%) students were absent on the day(s) that staff were screening at their schools. The percentage of excluded students is higher than the previous year's percentage, but the percentage of absent students is similar. The numbers of students screened in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 were 3,702, 4,123, and 4,356.

**Screening intensity.** Among the 128 elementary schools with Grade 2 in the Health Unit's jurisdiction, 99 were categorized as Low intensity, 15 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 78%, 71%, and 59%, respectively (Figure 3). This demonstrated a decrease in percentage for the Junior Kindergarten students from the previous school year which was 80%; and an increase for the Senior Kindergarten and Grade 2 students which were 70% and 59% respectively. Slightly more than 5% of Grade 2 students screened had two or more teeth with tooth decay (Figure 4).

**Urgent dental needs.** Six hundred and fifty-four 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). Six hundred and thirty students (96%) of those found to have Urgent dental needs were referred to and accepted at local dental offices for treatment. The percentage of students who were referred to and accepted at dental offices is higher than the 92% from the previous school year.

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

### Next Steps

Findings from the 2014-2015 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 will continue to work on strategies such as the school-based fluoride varnish program to address the percentages of Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and Grade 2 students who are caries-free. The Health Unit is currently working with selected schools to increase awareness about how to identify students experiencing dental discomfort. And finally, the Health Unit continues to work with schools that require active consents to develop strategies to improve participation in the program.

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



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