



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Dr. Alexander Summers, Medical Officer of Health
Emily Williams, Chief Executive Officer

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MLHU'S SENIORS' DENTAL CARE PROGRAM – PARTNERSHIPS

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Health receive Report No. 37-23, re: MLHU's Seniors' Dental Care Program - Partnerships for information.

Key Points

- The Ontario Seniors' Dental Care Program (OSDCP) is in high demand and currently has a waiting list for new patient exams.
- To respond to the high demand for service with the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, MLHU has entered into a variety of partnership agreements with oral health professionals in Middlesex-London to help meet the needs of the program.
- The Oral Health team eagerly awaits the opening of the new dental clinic in Strathroy in June 2023.

Background

The Ministry of Health launched the OSDCP in the fall of 2019 to provide routine dental care to low income individuals 65 years of age and older. Since the inception of the program, the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) has seen a high uptake for the program. This high demand coupled with a shortage in clinical space, and the COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in a waiting list for the program that the MLHU Oral Health Team is working diligently to address.

The Oral Health Team at the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) has worked closely with its official OSDCP partners, The Wright Clinic (TWC) and the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC), and entered into a variety of partnership agreements with additional Dental Practitioners to help expand services and reduce wait times.

TWC is a not-for-profit dental clinic that is located at the Glen Carin Community Resource Center in south east London. The clinic provides accessible oral health care to Londoners in need. The MLHU is proud to hold a seat on the board of directors for TWC and to have TWC as an official partner of the OSDCP. Additional information about TWC can be found in their Annual Report included as [Appendix A](#).

Status Update

Currently, MLHU has two operatories located in Citi Plaza to service both the OSDCP as well as children with Healthy Smiles Ontario Coverage. Two operatories do not adequately meet the needs of those eligible for dental services at the MLHU, and as such additional space is currently being built in Strathroy. However, to address immediate needs while the build in Strathroy is taking place, the MLHU is renting operatory space from TWC and the SOAHAC Muncey dental clinic. Partnering with both TWC and SOAHAC has allowed the MLHU to see approximately 15 additional patients per week.

The MLHU has provided approximately 225 patients to both TWC as well as to SOAHAC. These patients have OSDCP coverage but are now on the patient roster of these partner clinics. This allowed the MLHU to reduce those waiting for services by approximately 450 people, which was a significant help.

The number of emergencies that the MLHU receives per day has also exceed capacity of the Oral Health Team. Therefore, four private dental clinics have also signed service agreements and see emergency patients when required.

Next Steps

The Oral Health Team continues to work with its partners to address wait times, and eagerly anticipates the completion of the new dental clinic in Strathroy. The grand opening of the new clinic will be in June 2023.

This report was prepared by the Manager, Oral Health, in the Healthy Living Division.



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