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RESOLUTION

Date: June 23rd, 2010
Resolution: **#06-2010, Increased Funding to the Healthy Babies/Healthy Children Program**
MOVED BY: Richard Pollock
SECONDED BY: Kelly Conlin

At the Timiskaming Health Unit Board of Health meeting held on June 23rd, 2010, the Board reviewed the correspondence received from other health units regarding the above matter. Discussion ensued and the following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS the funding for Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) continues to be frozen, resulting in insufficient funding to maintain the level of services delivered through this program, and;

THAT the funding be sufficient to keep pace with the demands from client families, partner agencies and the community, and on the health unit itself as an employer, and;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health supports the recommendations of the Peterborough County-City Health Unit, Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District and the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Public Health to consider increasing funding for the HBHC program.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, Boards of Health, aIPHa Executive Director and Timiskaming Best Start Network.

- Carried
- Defeated
- Deferred

Chair - Board of Health

Board
Estelle
Kerry
P

KFL&A
Public Health

An accredited local public health agency affiliated with Queen's University
I.M. Gemmill MD, CCFP, FRCP(C) Medical Officer of Health

May 5, 2010

Honourable Laurel Broten
Minister of Children and Youth Services
56 Wellesley St. West, 14th Floor
Toronto ON M5S 2S3

Dear Minister Broten:

RE: Ministry of Children and Youth Services Funded Budgets

I am writing concerning the four budgets funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) that have been presented to the KFL&A Board of Health for consideration. The Board passed these budgets at its 28 April meeting through the following motion:

THAT the KFL&A Board of Health, with great reluctance once again, approve the 2010-2011 Ministry of Children and Youth Services Budget Submission for the Preschool Speech and Language Program, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Infant Hearing Screening Program, and Blind and Low Vision Program as presented, recognising that fewer children will receive the services that they need and that it will be impossible to meet the Ontario Public Health Standards for the Health babies, Healthy Children Programme, given the directives for these budgets from the MCYS; and

THAT the KFL&A Board of Health send a letter to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, acknowledging the Ministry's recognition of the need for increased funding to the Infant Hearing Screening Program, and requesting that the Ministry give the same consideration to Preschool Speech and Language Program, Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Blind and Low Vision Program, and ...

We thank the Ministry for its acknowledgement of the need to have an annual increment to the South Eastern Region Infant Hearing Program to maintain the integrity of this service. The recent investments in this program, through the recent one-time funding grants to purchase new ABAer hearing screening systems and the \$23,628 increase in base funding for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, will allow KFL&A Public Health to provide stable, high-quality infant hearing services to infants and young children in our communities.

The funding for other MCYS funded programs, however, including Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC), Blind Low Vision and Preschool Speech and Language continue to be frozen. This situation will lead to reductions in these services, one of which (HBHC) is an Ontario Public Health Standard (OPHS). The directive to freeze these budgets by the ministry staff for these programmes puts them and the children who receive these services at risk.

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KINGSTON, FRONTENAC AND LENNOX & ADDINGTON PUBLIC HEALTH

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Honourable Laurel Broten
May 5, 2010

This Board is extremely concerned about the effect that this reduction in services will have on the children in this area and across Ontario. First, 100 fewer pre-school children who need speech therapy receive this service than did in 2006. As you are aware, if a child has poor speech skills, learning at school is undermined and the child is at risk for poor social integration, with all of the attendant consequences. Freezing this budget undermines all of the other efforts that the Government of Ontario is making for the health of children and their success in the school system. This policy is short-sighted and harmful. In addition, the loss of up to two public health nurses in this area will reduce the early identification of children at risk through the HBHC programme. We feel very strongly that the integrity of this programme is being compromised and that children's well being is being put at risk. It is highly awkward for us, as a Board, to be required to approve a frozen budget that we know will make it impossible to meet this OPHS.

Early childhood development is a critical time in one's life, as it affects learning, behaviour and health throughout life. To ensure that services to support early childhood development continues without compromise, this Board requests that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services give the same consideration of investment for the Preschool Speech and Language, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, and Blind-Low Vision early intervention programs in the future. Without this investment in these programs, all of which have been frozen for yet another year, there will be additional consequent service reductions.

Our Medical Officer of Health, Dr Gemmill has written to you again recently on behalf of the Board to request a meeting with you to outline these concerns in more detail. There is an urgent need to have this conversation with you, so we trust that this meeting can be accommodated.

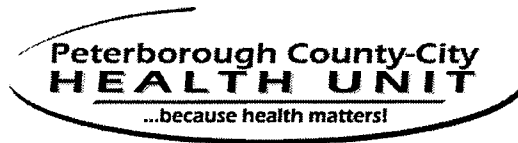
Thank you in advance for your consideration. We hope to meet with you soon.

Yours truly,



Beth Pater, Chair
KFL&A Board of Health

Copy to: Board of Health members
S. Weber, Manager, Early Years Programs Unit, MCYS
G. Sutherland and C. MacLean, Program Consultants, Early Years Programs Unit, MCYS
Hon. D. Duncan, Minister of Finance
Hon. J. Gerretsen, MPP, Kingston and the Islands
Hon. R. Hillier, MPP, Lanark, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington
L. Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Boards of Health, Local Public Health Agencies



June 3, 2010

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier
Legislative Building, Rm 281
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty,

On behalf of the Board of Health, Peterborough County-City Health Unit, I am writing to express concern regarding insufficient funding of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (HBHC) program and, as a consequence, an adverse impact on service delivery. We urge you to maintain this as a 100 percent provincially-funded program; and grant a sufficient increase to the annual budget, according to size of the annual cohort, to keep pace with demands from client families, partner agencies, and the community, and on the Health Unit itself as an employer.

HBHC is a prevention and early intervention program designed to help pregnant women and families with children from birth to six years of age. It is delivered by Public Health Nurses and Family Home Visitors (providing peer support) through telephone consultation and home visiting. The program gives families in Ontario the information and support they need to give their children a healthy start in life; and also to provide more intensive services and supports for families with children who may not reach their full potential due to identified risk factors. From a health, education, and economic standpoint - is there no better investment in our future?

Introduced in 1998 by the Government of Ontario, HBHC is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS); mandated under the Ontario Public Health Standards of the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care; and managed and coordinated by local Boards of Health (Public Health Unit or Health Department depending on the community). The 2010 budget allocation of \$828,413 from MCYS for Peterborough's program, represented a zero percent increase from 2009, coupled with a less than one percent (approximately \$8,000) increase to 2008's base budget. Each HBHC program must set projected achievements based on performance targets established by MCYS. However, inadequate funding has diminished the capacity of our Health Unit to achieve these targets and to provide necessary services. Measures taken to date have included the discontinuation of weekend telephone assessment and support services to new parents; a waitlist for families in high risk situations (e.g., families

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experiencing: inadequate coping skills, parenting concerns, mental health issues, social isolation, limited formal education, unemployment, no or limited finances, inadequate housing, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, physical health challenges); gapping of public health nurse positions, with a resultant increase in workload, stress, and personal safety concerns; and increased pressure on limited community services such as breastfeeding support, prenatal education and support for pregnant teens, and support for perinatal mood disorders.

HBHC has established itself as a valuable program in the community and has worked hard to build relationships with the Children's Aid Society, Ontario Early Years Centre, local hospital, Family Health Teams, addictions and mental health agencies, housing and social services agencies, and adult education and pre-employment agencies. However, with diminished resources, one is only to be reminded of the 2001 Coroner's Report regarding the death of infant Jordan Heikamp as evidence of a system breakdown. In the recommendations, HBHC was identified in playing a role to ensure the provision of health education; routine health assessments, and feeding and care of baby; and effective linkages and referrals with other medical professionals.

Therefore, our Board of Health urges MCYS to fund the actual costs associated with delivering HBHC, in order to achieve HBHC's goals and objectives, and to set the foundation for our future.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Jim Embrey
Chair, Board of Health
for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit

- c. The Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services
The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Jeff Leal, MPP, Peterborough
Andrea Horwath, MPP, Critic, Children and Youth Services
Sylvia Jones, MPP, Critic, Children and Youth Services
Ontario Boards of Health



June 9, 2010

The Honourable Lauren Broten
Minister of Children and Youth Services
Minister's Office
14th Floor
56 Wellesley St. W.
Toronto, ON
M5S 2S3

Dear Minister:

Subject: Increased Funding for Preschool Speech and Language and Healthy Babies Healthy Children Programs

At the Board of Health Meeting of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit held on May 20, 2010 the following motion was passed:

That: The Board of Health send a letter to the Minister of Children and Youth Services requesting that the Ministry give consideration to the need for increased funding to Preschool Speech and Language and the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Programs in order to protect the health and welfare of the children in our community.

Motion Carried.

Budgets for both of these programs have been frozen since 2008, after having only received a 1% increase in 2008. This situation has caused reductions in service to this vulnerable early years' population. Fewer children and families receiving services make it impossible to meet the Ontario Public Health Standards for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program.

As you are aware, if a child has poor speech skills, learning at school is undermined and the child is at risk for poor social integration. Freezing the budget undermines all of the other efforts that the Government of Ontario is making for the health of children and their success in the school system. Early childhood development is a critical time in one's life, as it affects learning, behaviour and health throughout life.

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The Honourable Laurel Broten

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June 9, 2010

We ask that the Minister consider increased funding for these programs and we look forward to hearing from you on this important health issue.

Sincerely,

THE CORPORATION OF THE LEEDS, GRENVILLE
AND LANARK DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Original Signed

(Mr.) Jack Butt
Chair of the Board

c: Linda Stewart, Executive Director, Association of Local Public Health Agencies
Steve Clark, MPP for Leeds and Grenville
Randy Hiller, MPP for Lanark, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
Norm Sterling, MPP for Carleton Mississippi Mills
Ontario Boards of Health