

September 25, 2024 - #BOH/2024/09/04

Whereas, due to the higher earnings potential in private practice, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) faces difficulties in recruiting dentists, as the compensation packages offered in public health are less competitive than those in private practice; and

Whereas, the demand for basic dental services in the district is very high. Despite its relatively small size, the Health Unit offers one of the larger Oral Health programs among health units in Ontario. This includes the highly-utilized Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (provincially mandated) and provision of a Low-Income Adult Dental Program (not mandated but based on local need) contributing to the large size of the Oral Health Program in addition to the Healthy Smiles Ontario program (mandated for low-income children and youth); and

Whereas, it is not yet known how or if the Federal dental program will impact the need and level of service in local communities; and

Whereas, equity-seeking populations tend to have complex dental, social and logistical needs, which require more intensive clinical and administrative resources. These challenges drive up the cost of oral care provision, dissuading private practitioners from accepting equity-seeking clients; and

Whereas, there is no central coordination of dental services across the province to ensure that the oral health workforce matches need, and that remuneration models and rates encourage equitable access to basic care across Ontario; and

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the North Bay Parry Sound District Board of Health (Board of Health) recommends that the Ministry of Health develop a provincial oral health strategy that includes a remuneration model for dentists designed to promote equitable access to basic preventive and treatment dental services throughout the province (whether delivered privately or in concert with public organizations); and

Furthermore, Be It Resolved, that the Board of Health recommends that the Ministry of Health undertake an evaluation of the current funding model for Oral Health services to inform the above-recommended provincial oral health strategy; and,

Furthermore, Be It Resolved, that the Board of Health provide correspondence of these resolutions to the Honourable Doug Ford (Premier), the Honourable Sylvia Jones (Ontario Minister of Health), Dr. Kieran Moore (Chief Medical Officer of Health), Victor Fedeli, MPP (Nipissing), Graydon Smith, MPP (Parry Sound-Muskoka), John Vanthof, MPP (Timiskaming-Cochrane), Michael Sherar (President and CEO of Public Health Ontario), Ontario Boards of Health and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA), **Association of Municipalities of Ontario, The District of Parry Sound Municipal Association, and member Municipalities.**