

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 16, 2011, Peterborough

Health Unit Announces New Dental Clinic Location

Downtown Site at Peterborough Square Ideal for Healthy Smiles Ontario Clients

Today the Peterborough County-City Health Unit announced that Peterborough Square, with store front access to George Street, will be the location of its new dental clinic.

"We are pleased to become a part of the family of organizations who keep our downtown strong. It was very important that our clinic be located downtown so it's easy for people to reach by public transit and close to other health and social services," said Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health. "Thanks to the support of Healthy Smiles Ontario, this new clinic will be an important enhancement to our local public health infrastructure and a place where clients can be connected to other public health programs as well."

The Health Unit will be investing approximately \$567,000 to develop the new clinic at Peterborough Square unit which will feature two treatment rooms (with an optional third treatment room), a reception area, client waiting room, fully accessible washroom and private consultation office.

Dr. Pellizzari noted that this clinic in many ways will serve as a gateway to clients' better health as Health Unit staff can provide families with information related to nutrition, food access, tobacco-free living, parenting, and a host of other public health resources. "Supporting our clients in ways beyond oral health is what makes the public health model so successful," she explained.

"Accessing dental care for children can be a challenge for some Ontario families, particularly for those families without dental benefit coverage. Preventing and treating oral problems at a young age will improve the overall health of Ontarians resulting in reduced health costs down the road," said MPP Jeff Leal who participated in today's announcement.

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NEWS RELEASE

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The Healthy Smiles Ontario program provides preventive dental care at no cost to children and youth who:

- Are 17 years and under.
- Are members of a household with an Adjusted Family Net Income of \$20,000 per year or less
- Don't have access to any form of dental coverage.

Oral health is important not only to individuals' appearance and sense of well-being, but also to overall health. Cavities and gum disease may contribute to many serious conditions, such as diabetes and respiratory diseases. Untreated cavities can also be painful and lead to serious infections. Studies are also currently examining whether there is a link between poor oral health and heart disease and between poor oral health and women delivering pre-term, low birth rate babies.

There are 12.6% of residents in the city of Peterborough who are living on low income. The Health Unit is already seeing a demand for the Healthy Smiles Ontario program with 100 children and youth signed up so far. The benefits extend beyond the immediate health needs of these 100 young people and also give much needed peace of mind to their parents as well.

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For further information, please contact:

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