SUBJECT: Anonymous HIV Testing Budget 2008/2009 - BOH08032 (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:
That the 2008 Anonymous HIV Testing Program budget which is 100% funded by the Province be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
The Anonymous HIV Testing Program is a 100% funded prevention initiative intended to encourage persons at risk to be tested for HIV. Base funding to PHS for 2008 has been confirmed to be $56,645 from the AIDS Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC). These funds enable PHS to offer Anonymous HIV testing hours at 3 clinic sites equivalent to 0.6 FTE Public Health Nurse (PHN). Anonymous HIV testing (AT) is offered at 50 locations in communities across Ontario. Ontario has recently introduced rapid, point of care (POC) HIV testing that can give test results in one visit. POC testing will be available through PHS clinic in fall 2008.
BACKGROUND:

HIV testing determines whether or not a person is infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which destroys the body's ability to fight off illness, and is the cause of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Anonymous HIV testing is available at 3 PHS clinic sites in Hamilton:
- STD Clinic, Hamilton General Hospital, Wednesday 4:30-7 pm
- East End Clinic, 12:30-4 pm Monday and 3-6 pm Thursday
- Street Health Centre, Wesley Centre, Monday to Friday, various hours

Clients are offered comprehensive pre and post HIV test counselling by skilled and experienced public health nurses. Historically, PHS has tested between 300 – 600 clients in Hamilton per year through the Anonymous testing program, detecting on average 2 – 4 new HIV cases per year. If a client tests HIV positive, referrals are made to agencies in the city including Hamilton AIDS Network and Special Immunology Services clinic at McMaster. Partner notification is discussed with newly diagnosed persons and assistance offered to notify partners anonymously.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Anonymous HIV testing allows a person to find out his/her HIV status without giving a name or any personal information. Clients are given a code number which is not linked to their health card or record. Many clients prefer anonymous testing and would not otherwise be tested because of fear of stigma, discrimination, or loss of privacy, especially in applications for insurance.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

The Board of Health could decide not to approve the Anonymous HIV 2008 budget. Not approving this budget would impact negatively on HIV testing options for City of Hamilton residents and result in decreased staffing and/or hours at STD and Sexual Health Clinics. As the budget is 100% provincially funded, not approving the budget would have no financial benefit to the City levy, nor other benefits.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Although multiple Public Health Nurses perform Anonymous HIV testing at PHS clinics, current funding supports the equivalent of 0.6 FTE Public Health Nurse (PHN) salary, benefits and required audit fees. Current staff salary and benefits are outstripping the budget which is not covering operating expenses including telephone, computer and mileage. A decision will be required in 2009 whether staffing or service levels will need to be decreased due to this deficit. PHS will return to the Board of Health in early 2009 with a recommendation report requesting increased funding from the Ministry in order to cover operating expenses.
### POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

Any future staff reduction must be communicated to ONA Local 50.

### RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

Finance and Administration have provided the financial data included in this report.

### CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

- Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Public services and programs are delivered in an equitable manner, coordinated, efficient, effective and easily accessible to all citizens.

- Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

- Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Awareness of infection with HIV allows the affected individual to better manage the infection, resulting in improved care, and better life decisions.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Anonymous testing is considered an important part of high quality HIV programs.