To: Chair and Members  
Emergency & Community Services Committee

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Date: November 15, 2007

Re: Water Filter Fund (ECS07089) (City Wide)

Council Direction:

Not applicable.

Information:

Summary

On June 7, 2007, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) announced Ontario's Action Plan on Lead. One component of this plan was the commitment to assist low-income parents with infants and young children, and pregnant women living in older neighbourhoods with the cost of water filters. The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) is providing $4.4M to fund a Water Filter Fund (WFF) program.

In September 2007, the Community Services Department was informed of the following:

- Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) are responsible for the administration of the program.
- The program must be available by November 1, 2007.
- The City of Hamilton will receive $352,800 to deliver the WFF program for 2007/08, plus an additional $35,280 (10% of the WFF program funding) for administration of the program.
- Special Supports will hire a 0.5 FTE to help support this additional program; the position with be funded 100% through the Water Filter Funding.
Background

The WFF is a one-time 100% provincial fund. Allocation of the WFF was based on municipalities that have previously been identified as having elevated lead levels in their drinking water, and on the estimated eligible population within the social assistance caseload. The City of Hamilton was confirmed as one of the identified municipalities with high levels of lead above the drinking water quality of 10 microgram/litre.

The local WFF program was designed to further protect vulnerable households from potential harm. The implementation will assist low income households (including those on social assistance and fixed incomes) with children aged six and under, and/or pregnant women that have elevated lead levels in their household drinking/cooking water to purchase National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), 53 International certified, on-tap water filters. Please refer to the Board of Health’s Report BOH07049 - Update on Lead in Tap Water in Hamilton, which went before Committee of the Whole on October 9, 2007, for information on the sources and health effects of lead.

Implementation

The Province recognized that CMSMs have substantial knowledge and experience in these areas, as it is similar in manner to the Emergency Energy Fund (EEF) and they are also the service system managers for emergency programs. It has been recommended that CMSMs either deliver the WFF Program or flow the allocation to community organizations to administer the program.

The Community Services Department, Benefit Eligibility Division, Special Supports Program will deliver the program internally, based on the following:

- The Special Supports Program currently manages the health related mandatory and discretionary program, along with the Utilities Arrears Program and is currently servicing the target population;
- Established collaboration with the Public Health Department and the Public Works Department, Water and Waste Water Division;
- Short timelines to establish the WFF;
- Existing client database; and,
- Existing tools to communicate with the residents of Hamilton and its service providers.

Eligibility Criteria

Low-income households may be entitled to receive assistance for up to $100/year to purchase an on-tap filter, if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Social assistance benefit units with benefit unit members that are pregnant or with children aged zero to six;
- Low income households that have a net household income of $20,000 or less with family members who are pregnant or with children in the home aged zero to six; and,
Verification Households must have their drinking water tested and have lab results that indicate lead content exceeding the 0.010 mg/L Ontario Drinking Water Standard (e.g. Report from Water and Wastewater Division or a Private laboratory).

Applicants are also required to provide documentation to verify:

- Age of children (if applicable);
- Income (2006 Income Tax Assessment and/or verification of current income) or in receipt of social assistance;
- Pregnancy (if applicable); and,
- Resident of the City of Hamilton.

If eligible, a cheque in the amount of $100 will be issued to purchase a National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), 53 International certified, on-tap water filter from a local vendor.

Performance Measurements and Indicators

The WWF has performance measures and reporting requirements, which include the following:

- Number of households assisted;
- Type of household assisted; (i.e., Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, and other low income);
- Total expenditures by program and administration; and,
- The balance in the fund at fiscal year-end March 31, 2008.

Communication Plan

Information regarding the WFF was included in the Public Health Services and Public Works Department Lead Service Communication Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report ECS07089, which was implemented on November 5, 2007. The Communication Plan involved elementary school children, daycare children, clients of Ontario Early Years Centres, family physicians and new parents, and was made publicly available via Councillors’ Offices, Municipal Service Centres, Community Centres, and Libraries.

The City of Hamilton’s WWF Program Brochure has been developed and is attached as Appendix B to Report ECS07089. The brochure will be available electronically at [www.hamilton.ca](http://www.hamilton.ca) and will be distributed with all approvals from Cribs and Car Seats.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department
COMMUNICATION PLAN

Develop Information Package:

Public Health and Public Works will prepare an “Information Package” to include information about:

- Public Health Messages
- Lead Service Replacement Program
- Filter Fund Eligibility under Ontario Works

The information package will be available on City’s Website and will supplement the information currently available on the City’s website at (www.hamilton.ca/) . Printed copies will be prepared for further dissemination.

Timeline: Information package available on City’s website by 19 October 2007 and printed copies available by end of October 2007.

Information Dissemination:

High Risk Groups (Children under the age of 6, Pregnant Women)

Communication to High Risk Group:

1) Information Package Availability coupled with communication by public Health Staff at Ontario Early Years Centers (OEYCs)
2) Information Package to pregnant women through Public Health Services Prenatal Programs
3) Information Package dissemination to all family physicians
4) Information packages available to parents at all licensed day cares
5) Information Packages will be provided to all elementary school students to take home. This will be done via the two school boards and directly to all private schools.

Timeline: Public health staff will provide updated information through the OEYCs and daycares effective immediately. New packages will be developed to reflect the new service line replacement pilot and dissemination will begin immediately after the printed material is available and will be completed by end of November 2007.

Communication to General Population

1) Information provided through inserts in Water Bills
2) Information Package availability at Municipal Service Centers, Councillor Constituency Offices, Public Library, Community Centers
3) Public Health and Public Works staff attend, when requested, Councillor Ward Meetings
4) Information Packages distributed at the various Water and Wastewater Public Information Sessions as part of public meetings and EA

Timeline: Ongoing after availability of printed material
If your house or apartment was built before 1955 you should check your water service to see if it is made of lead.

These filters are NSF 53-certified.

**Applica Consumer Products**  
(Black and Decker brand name)  
Various Models approx. $40

**Aqua Select (Clear Flow)**  
(PC Choice brand name)  
Various Models approx. $40

**Culligan International Company**  
Faucet mount water filter  
FM-15, IC1000, WFM 17,  
Professional 150 approx. $25

**Pur Water Systems**  
FM-3000 and FM-3700 approx. $60

**Brita Products Company**  
Aquaview On tap  
Faucet Filtration System  
AVFF-100 approx. $60

Information provided by the Ministry of Environment.
The water service is the pipe that brings water into your house from the water main. Lead pipes are dull gray in colour but are shiny silver when scratched with a knife or key. They are softer than copper pipes and can be easily scratched.

If you are not sure if your service is lead you can call for a free inspection from Hamilton Public Works. Call 905-546-4426 and ask for a Check Size and Type Inspection.

**Important Health Information**

If you have, or think you have lead pipes:
- alternate sources of drinking water should be considered for children less than 6 years of age and pregnant women
- or attach a filter to the tap that is NSF 53-certified (see back page) which will remove the lead
- if your water has not been used for 6 hours, run the cold water for 5 minutes before drinking or using for cooking

**Water Filter Fund**

If your water service is made of lead, you may be eligible to receive the Water Filter Fund of up to $100 per household. To be eligible you must have a household income of less than $20,000 and have a family member who is pregnant or a child who is aged 0 - 6. You will also need proof that lead is present in the household drinking water (lab results must exceed 0.010 mg/L Ontario Drinking Water Standard).

To test your drinking water for lead you may call the City of Hamilton Public Works at 905-546-4426 to obtain a free water test.

If you live in an older apartment building your superintendent can call to have this test done. You may also call the lab of your choice, but a fee may be charged.

Call Special Supports to apply for the Water Filter Fund or for more information.

905-546-2590