

**Ministry of Health and Long-Term  
Care**

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Public Health Planning and  
Liaison Branch

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**Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de  
longue durée**

Division de la santé publique  
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December 2015

**Re: Changes to Public Dental Programs in Ontario**

Dear colleagues,

This memo includes important information about upcoming changes to dental programs in Ontario, including key dates and administrative changes relating to service schedules and claims administration. Starting January 1, 2016 six publicly funded dental programs will be integrated into the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program – a publicly-funded Program for children and youth aged 17 and under from low-income families. The new Program will provide seamless enrolment and other enhanced client supports, making it easier for eligible children and youth to receive timely dental care. The new Program will be 100% provincially funded and managed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The Healthy Smiles Ontario Program will also streamline administration and delivery of services. AccertaClaim Servcorp Inc. (Accerta) will assume responsibility as the Program Administrator as of January 1, 2016 while Public Health Units will retain a key role to deliver other oral health services and supports at the local level. This change will modernize claims management including the implementation of electronic claims submission, more timely review and payment of claims, and the use of a single schedule of dental services.

Children and youth receiving dental coverage under current benefits and programs are being transitioned to the new integrated Healthy Smiles Ontario Program. As previously communicated, dental providers are asked to continue to participate and treat clients including scheduling future appointments and developing treatment plans, even if these extend beyond January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – as treatment plans should be continuous for clients that are being transitioned to the new program. More details on key dates and changes related to service schedules and claims administration are enclosed.

Please share this memo and the enclosed Frequently Asked Questions with your colleagues and staff. Further information will also be provided in the coming weeks, including the new schedule of dental services and further detail regarding operational impacts for participating providers. If you have questions about this memo or the new integrated Healthy Smiles Ontario Program, please contact Jacky Sweetnam, Manager, Low-Income Dental Integration at 416-326-9751 or by email at [Jacky.Sweetnam@ontario.ca](mailto:Jacky.Sweetnam@ontario.ca).

Thank you for your participation and support to improve access to oral health care in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth S. Walker  
Director, Public Health Planning and Liaison Branch  
Public Health Division

Enclosed: Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- **Current publicly-funded oral health benefits and/or programs (i.e., dental benefits for children under Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program, the Children In Need of Treatment Program, the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program, and preventive services within the *Ontario Public Health Standards, 2008*) are being integrated into one program – Healthy Smiles Ontario – as of January 1, 2016.**
- **The new program will serve children and/or youth who meet specific eligibility requirements including financial, Ontario residency and age.**
- **The new program will include preventive, core (routine and restorative) and emergency/essential services streams.**
- **There will be a new HSO dental card for all clients. Clients who are enrolled in current programs are being transitioned to the new program and will receive a new card prior to January 1, 2016.**
- **All clients will have a standard benefit year – August 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>, except clients in the emergency and essential services stream who will be eligible for 12 months from their date of enrollment. All cards will display an expiry date clearly.**
- **Electronic claims submission will be implemented as of January 1, 2016 with Accerta as the new program administrator.**
- **Some pre-authorizations will still have to be submitted by paper for a short time. The Ministry is working with Accerta to also implement electronic processes for submission of pre-authorizations and other documentation. This is expected to be in place as soon as possible in 2016.**
- **Treatment plans for currently enrolled children will continue. Providers are asked to keep treating currently enrolled children.**
- **You are asked to keep treating HSO, CINOT and Social Assistance clients. They will be transitioned to the new program and will receive a new card.**
- **A new service schedule is under development and will be available in the coming weeks.**
- **As of January 1, 2016 claims must be submitted to Accerta. Claims may be mailed, sent via secure fax, or submitted electronically (EDI) to Accerta:**

**For EDI submissions, the Primary Policy/Plan Number is HSO.**

**Accerta's carrier code is 311140 and can be added under the Instream network.**

**For Mail: AccertaClaim Servcorp Inc.  
Healthy Smiles Ontario Contact Centre  
Station P, P.O. Box 2286  
Toronto, ON, M5S 3J8**

**Secure Fax: 416-354-2354 or toll-free at 1-877-258-3392**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Key Features of the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program

#### 1. Which benefits and programs are being integrated?

- Ontario Works (including Temporary Care Assistance but excluding Emergency Assistance);
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);
- Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD);
- Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO);
- Children In Need Of Treatment (CINOT); and
- Preventive services within the *Ontario Public Health Standards, 2008*.

The new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program has three streams to address the variation of enrolment and clinical needs of clients:

- The Core Services Stream
- The Emergency and Essential Services Stream (EESS)
- The Preventive Services Only Stream

#### 2. What types of services will be covered by the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?

The new program will provide routine, preventive, and emergency and essential treatment services to eligible children. A new service schedule is under development and will be made available to dental providers in the coming weeks.

#### 3. Who is eligible for the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?

Children aged 0-17 who are Ontario residents and who meet one of the following income tests will be eligible:

- Member of a social assistance benefit unit (Ontario Works, ODSP or ACSD); or
- Member of a family whose previous year's income is at or below the threshold which provides 90% of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) as indicated at [ontario.ca/healthysmiles](http://ontario.ca/healthysmiles).

In addition, eligibility for other dental insurance will not automatically deem a child ineligible for the Program. Further information regarding this aspect of the Program will be provided prior to January 1, 2016.

Children or youth with an urgent dental condition can also access treatment if they meet clinical and financial hardship criteria.

#### 4. How do families apply for the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?

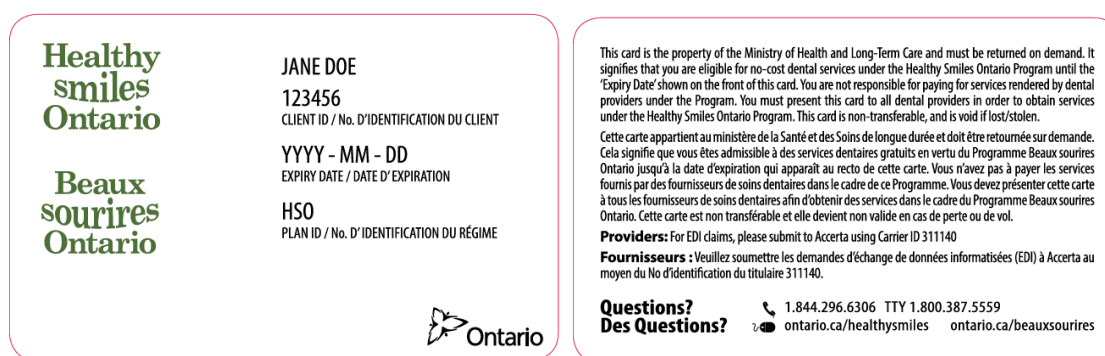
Children and/or youth in receipt of social assistance will be automatically enrolled. They will receive a new HSO dental card prior to January 1, 2016.

Children and/or youth who are enrolled in the current Healthy Smiles Ontario and CINOT Programs are also being 'grandparented' into the new program. They will also receive a new HSO dental card prior to January 1, 2016.

Please note: Although clients may present with their new dental card prior to January 1, 2016, their new dental cards are not valid until January 1, 2016.

All other low-income families can apply online or by mail and will have their eligibility assessed and verified based on their family income as reported to the Canada Revenue Agency. There will also be an in-year manual process for applying to the program for clients who did not file income tax or whose financial circumstances change after having filed their previous year's income tax.

Clients will receive a new HSO Dental Card:



## 5. How will children and/or youth who have an emergency dental condition access services under the new program?

It is anticipated that most children in need of emergency and/or essential treatment will be identified by the local Public Health Unit through school, or other community-based screening; as they are now for the Children in Need of Treatment Program.

However, a limited number of children and/or youth may present directly at a dental practice, particularly after business hours. In these cases dental providers are being asked to assist the family and/or client to complete and submit an enrolment form for the Emergency and Essential Services Stream (EESS) of the program, to Accerta.

Forms for use by dental providers in private practice will be available electronically by January 1, 2016. Providers are asked to assess the presenting child/youth for clinical need as defined in the new service schedule, and to ask the family to fill out the form with required identifying information as well as to sign it attesting to financial need.

Further information regarding this aspect of the Program, including the relevant detailed processes, samples of forms, the definition of financial hardship, and the role of participating dental providers will be provided prior to January 1, 2016.

Providers should still expect to see children who have been directed to them by their local public health unit.

## **6. What is the benefit period for enrolled clients?**

For all clients except EESS, the new program will have a standard benefit period – August 1 to July 31. EESS clients will have 12 months of eligibility from their date of enrollment.

Starting on January 1, 2016, Healthy Smiles Ontario clients [except EESS] will be enrolled until the end of the benefit year (July 31, 2016). Thereafter, children and/or youth will be enrolled for a standard benefit period (August 1—July 31).

Clients' HSO dental cards will clearly indicate their individual expiry date. Standardizing the benefit period is intended to provide more clarity and stability to both clients and providers.

## **7. What is the role of Public Health Units in the delivery of the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?**

Public Health Units will no longer have a role in claims administration; however they and other partners will continue to have a significant role in the delivery of oral health programming in Ontario.

Public Health Units will continue to implement population-oriented oral health promotion and awareness activities; undertake oral health screening; provide case management for children and youth identified through public health screening; deliver preventive and other oral health services (as they do in the current state); and work collaboratively with dental providers to promote awareness of public programs, as well as assist clients to access a dental provider.

## **8. Are dental providers required to register or enroll to participate in Healthy Smiles Ontario?**

No. There is no required registration or enrollment for providers participating in the Healthy Smiles Ontario Program.

Starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 providers can participate by treating Healthy Smiles Ontario clients and submitting claims to the Program Administrator, AccertaClaim Servcorp Inc. (Accerta).

Once a dental provider has submitted a claim for payment they will have accepted the terms and conditions of the new program. The terms and conditions will be included in the new service schedule.

Dental providers are not required to participate in publicly-funded programs. They participate on a voluntary basis only.

**9. How can dental providers and clients receive information about the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?**

Information about the Program, including eligibility requirements and enrolment processes will be available on the Healthy Smiles Ontario website: [www.ontario.ca/healthysmiles](http://www.ontario.ca/healthysmiles) (English version) or [www.ontario.ca/beauxsourires](http://www.ontario.ca/beauxsourires) (French version) or by contacting any local Public Health Unit.

**Schedule of Dental Services and Fees**

**10. What services will be covered in the new service schedule(s)?**

The Program will provide preventive, routine, and emergency and essential treatment services to eligible children.

There will be one service schedule for dentist providers and one for non-dentist providers (e.g., dental hygienists, denturists, physician anaesthetists, etc.). The new schedules are currently being finalized and will be made available to dental providers in the coming weeks.

**11. Will the service schedule include services and fees for dental specialists?**

Yes. The service schedule for dentist providers will include services and fees for both general dental practitioners and dental specialists recognized by the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

**12. Will the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care be increasing Dentists' fees?**

Changes to reimbursement rates are not part of the Low Income Dental Integration commitment at this time.

**13. Will a specialist still require a referral from a general dental practitioner in order to be reimbursed at the specialist rates?**

No. A referral from a general practitioner is no longer required.

**Program Administration and Key Dates**

**14. Who will administer the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?**

Accerta has been secured to provide specific program administration supports including dental claims management.

Claims for treatment provided from January 1, 2016 onwards must be submitted to Accerta. Any claims for treatment provided up to and including December 31, 2015



must be submitted as per current processes – to the local Public Health Unit or Social Services Program Administrator.

**15. What is the last date to provide services under current benefits and programs?**

Current administrators will continue to receive, process and pay claims for clients in existing programs up to December 31, 2015. Dental providers are asked to submit claims as soon as possible in 2015 to ensure timely payment and processing.

Providers should submit current (2015) claims to local Public Health Units or Social Services Program Administrators as soon as possible in 2015. Public Health Units have been asked to ‘close out’ all claims for 2015 by February 29, 2016. Claims for ODSP must also be received prior to February 29, 2016, while all Ontario Works claims must be received and paid by March 31, 2016.

As of January 1, 2016 dental providers will provide services in accordance with the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Schedule of Dental Services and Fees and submit claims to Accerta for processing.

**16. How do I submit a claim under the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program?**

Accerta will assume responsibility as the Program Administrator as of January 1st, 2016, and claims may be mailed, sent via secure fax, or submitted electronically (EDI) to Accerta beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2016:

AccertaClaim Servcorp Inc.  
Healthy Smiles Ontario Contact Centre  
Station P, P.O. Box 2286  
Toronto, ON, M5S 3J8

Secure Fax: 416-354-2354 or toll-free at 1-877-258-3392

For EDI submissions, the Primary Policy/Plan Number is HSO. Accerta’s carrier code is 311140 and can be added under the Instream network.

For mailed paper-based claims forms, the treating dentist must sign, or stamp [using Ontario Dental Association (ODA) issued “Office verification stamp”] each claim form submitted. Additionally, treating dentists must list their unique identification number under the “Unique No” field of the Dentist section of the form. The “Patient Signature” section does not apply to the Program, and therefore should not be signed by the patient. If using the “Standard Dental Claim Form”, the client’s identification number located on the front of their HSO dental card should be listed under the “Patient ID No” field of the “Patient Information” section of the form. In the “Employee/Plan Member/Subscriber” section of the form, the “Group Policy No” should be listed as “HSO”. Accerta’s carrier code 311140 should be listed under the “Division/Section No.” The name of the program (Healthy Smiles Ontario) should be listed under “Name of Insuring Agency or Plan” field.

**17. What should I do if a client presents for treatment on January 1, 2016 and says that they have not received their new card?**

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is currently working to transition currently enrolled Social Assistance, Healthy Smiles Ontario, and CINOT clients to the new Healthy Smiles Ontario Program.

All currently enrolled clients will be mailed a new HSO dental card prior to January 1, 2016. However, we recognize that cards may be lost, or there may be other issues that arise. For lost or stolen cards, the client and/or parent/guardian must contact the ServiceOntario INFOline toll-free at 1-844-296-6306 (Canada). TTY users can call 416-327-4282 (TTY GTA) or toll-free at 1-800-387-5559 (TTY Canada).

Providers can also phone Accerta directly to determine if a child is enrolled in the HSO program. Once this has been confirmed by Accerta treatment can be initiated.

**18. What about current CINOT children? What happens if one of these children presents without an HSO dental card after January 1, 2016?**

As noted, currently enrolled CINOT clients are being transitioned to the Program under the Emergency and Essential Services Stream. We ask that dental providers continue to participate and treat clients, including scheduling future appointments and developing treatment plans, even if these extend beyond January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

If a client presents on or after January 1, 2016 providers are asked to help ensure that they are still enrolled in the program by contacting Accerta to confirm enrolment.

If there is no record of transition, dental providers are asked to assist the client or parent/guardian to complete an Application/Enrolment Form for HSO-Emergency and Essential Services Stream and send the completed form to Accerta. The Emergency and Essential Services Stream application form will be available to dental providers prior to January 1, 2016.

**19. How does the integration of programs affect clients who are waiting for specialist appointments or who have existing treatment plans that extend beyond January 1, 2016?**

Dental providers are asked to maintain treatment plans and to encourage clients to keep future appointments during the transition to the integrated program. As noted, currently enrolled clients are being transitioned so that they can continue treatment. Dental providers will be reimbursed for services during this period.

As noted, Accerta will assume responsibility as the Program Administrator as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016, and claims may be mailed, sent via secure fax, or submitted electronically (EDI) to Accerta beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2016:

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