

Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program

Providing an early intervention program to vulnerable
families and children during COVID-19

October 21, 2021



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Background

- 100% funded mandatory program within the Ontario Public Health Standards
- Voluntary prevention and early intervention program
- For pregnant women and families with young children up to the age of six
- Aim to optimize newborn and child healthy growth and development and reduce health inequities for families receiving services

Who are we?



Healthy Babies Healthy Children

Why is it important?

- HBHC works with marginalized families who would often not seek out support or assistance

Common challenges

- isolation
- poverty
- lack of education
- victims of abuse/violence
- mental health and addictions

Program components

- Universal components:
 - HBHC screening tool
 - 48-hour contact and assessment in the postpartum period
- Targeted components:
 - Blended home visiting program

What changed during COVID-19?

- Prioritized program to continue during the pandemic
- Mainly delivered via a hybrid service model
- Enhanced screening and PPE measures
- Decrease in community referrals to the program
- Implemented in-home COVID-19 vaccination program

Year over year comparison

	# offered	# active	# visits/month
2019	1437	329	298
2020	1462	265	303
2021 to Oct 20	Not available	255	304

- No difference in how many clients were offered the program
- Slight decrease in # of families in HBHC program, but:
 - By end of the year, we anticipate to have surpassed last 2020 enrollment
 - Increased number of visits per family compared to 2019. Possibly points to caseload complexity

Deeper impacts of COVID-19: “Notes from the field”

- Longer community service wait times
- Virtual platform is not optimal
- Missed opportunities
- Increased family stress and isolation
- Need for breastfeeding clinic services

Where do we go from here?

- Continue to ensure full-service delivery
- Ongoing review of delivery model (virtual/in-person)
- Increase community referrals to the program
- “Catching up” on specialized staff training
- Ongoing review of workload and capacity should the demand for the program increase this fall and winter

Commendation

We have taken note of the innovative approaches to service delivery that your Health Unit is employing to support the HBHC program including the triage and prioritization tools that you have adopted as well as the approach you have taken to manage clients on the waiting list by calling weekly to determine if their needs have changed.

Director, Child Development and Specialized Services Branch, Ministry Children, Community and Social Services, September 20, 2021

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