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RC

DATE

5 March 1999

TO/DEST.

The Chair and Members of Council

FROM/EXP.

Medical Officer of Health

SUBJECT/OBJET

**HEALTHY BABIES, HEALTHY CHILDREN - FAMILY  
VISITOR PROGRAM - UPDATE JANUARY 1999**

Information Previously Distributed

To be listed on the Community Services  
Committee Agenda, 1 Apr 99

Early childhood experiences make a critical and long-term difference in children's health and well-being during childhood and as adults. Healthy Babies, Healthy Children is a prevention/early intervention program designed to give children a better start in life. It is a joint Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) initiative under the direction of the Office of Integrated Services for Children. Healthy Babies, Healthy Children is intended to augment and strengthen existing services for families and children in the province of Ontario. The revised Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines for Boards of Health include the goals, objectives and program requirements of Healthy Babies, Healthy Children. Planning for this new program is linked with the MCSS initiative *Making Services Work for People*.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Ottawa-Carleton Health Department received \$341,000 in November, 1998 for the 1998-1999 fiscal year for Healthy Babies, Healthy Children from the Ministry of Health. The Department has recently been informed ongoing funding for the program starting in March, 1999 will be \$1.7 Million.

CONCLUSION

Identifying young children who are at risk of poor social, emotional, cognitive and physical health and intervening as early as possible can improve the child's life prospects. In many cases, severe problems can be prevented if professionals and other service providers who have contact with children and families intervene early to provide supports. This additional funding will allow us to support an additional full-time Family Visitor and provide additional visits to families across the Region.

*Approved by*  
*Robert Cushman, MD MBA FRCPC*