



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Budget Adjustment to the Toronto Public Health 2012
Approved Operating Budget - Infant Hearing Program**

Date:	February 24, 2012
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is providing a one-time grant of \$400,000 to Toronto Public Health (TPH) for the purchase of new infant hearing screening equipment. Funding must be spent by March 31, 2012. TPH delivers the Infant Hearing Program (IHP) through 100% funding from the MCYS. Equipment currently used to conduct hearing screening on all Toronto newborns is aging and in need of replacement.

The Ministry has selected the required supplier through an open Request for Proposals process, such that all IHPs in the Province will purchase the same screening equipment. This will ensure consistency throughout the province provides the cost advantage of bulk purchasing. The purchase of this equipment for the Toronto IHP is essential in order to continue to ensure the reliability of screening results and the capacity to maintain high quality screening throughout the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. Toronto Public Health 2012 Approved Operating Budget be increased by \$400,000 gross and \$0 net to reflect one time funding provided by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to purchase screening equipment for the Infant Hearing Program; and

2. The Board of Health forward this report to the City Council meeting of March 5, 2012.

Financial Impact

The table below summarizes the required budget adjustment to the TPH 2012 Approved Operating Budget.

Budget Adjustment to the 2012 Approved Operating Budget			
	Gross \$000	Revenue \$000	Net
2012 Confirmed Funding from MCYS – One-time funding for screening equipment purchase	400.0	400.0	0.0

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its June 7, 2011 meeting, the Board of Health received a report entitled "2011 Update on Public Health Programs funded by the MCYS". This report related to the 100% MCYS funded programs that are delivered by TPH; namely the Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Preschool Speech and Language, Infant Hearing and Blind-Low Vision programs. With respect to the IHP, it identified a pressure on the IHP budget related to a chronic shortage of funding for screening supplies and aging equipment that is in need of replacement. The report indicated TPH's intention to seek a one-time grant from the MCYS to address these pressures.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

As part of its Early Learning Initiative, the MCYS provides TPH with 100% funding to deliver a number of programs that are aimed at promoting the healthy growth and development of children between the ages of 0 and 6 years. One of these programs is the IHP.

The IHP began in 2003 and includes universal newborn screening , regular monitoring of at risk children, audiology assessment and support for families who have a child with an identified hearing loss. Equipment requirements and protocols related to newborn hearing screening are established by the MCYS. This ensures a consistent approach to screening across the entire province.

The equipment used by TPH, and the hospitals that it contracts with, to conduct hearing screening on all newborns prior to their discharge from hospital, and at community-based follow-up clinics is approaching the end of its lifespan. The manufacturer has indicated that it will not warranty or service this equipment in 2012. This will have an impact on

the reliability of test results and capacity to provide city-wide coverage should any of the current equipment malfunction and become unusable.

COMMENTS

The MCYS is providing TPH with a one-time grant of \$400,000 for the purchase of infant hearing equipment and related supplies. Because the MCYS funding for the IHP is based on an April 1 to March 31 fiscal year, this grant must be spent by March 31, 2012. In order to ensure all hearing screening programs in the province use the same equipment, MCYS has already conducted a Request for Proposal for vendors and provided direction on the specifications of the equipment that must be purchased with the grant funding.

TPH requires an adjustment in March to its 2012 Operating Budget in order to proceed with the purchase of the required equipment. It is essential that TPH proceed with the purchase of new screening equipment in a timely manner. Ensuring the reliability of screening test results is critical to the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. As the existing equipment fails and the manufacturer is unable to repair it, service would have to be reduced across the City. More importantly, a false positive test result can cause undue concern and anxiety on the part of new parents who may be left thinking that their newborn has a potential hearing loss. Conversely, a false negative result can delay early identification and intervention for a child with a potential hearing loss.

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SIGNATURE

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