



**Public Health**  
**Santé publique**  
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

March 31, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Honourable Sylvia Jones  
Minister of Health of Ontario  
Ministry of Health  
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C8

Dear Honourable Minister Jones:

**Re: Healthy Smiles Ontario fee schedule and access to dental care for children and youth**

Our Board thanks your government for its ongoing leadership in expanding access to dental care, particularly through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program.

At its meeting on February 19, 2026, the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts passed resolution #15-26 requesting that the Ministry of Health update the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) Schedule of Dental Services and Fees to improve provider participation and access to dental care for children and youth. The full resolution is attached as an appendix.

Untreated dental disease in children contributes to pain, disrupted eating and sleep, ultimately impacting school performance and the long-term success of children. Complications of untreated dental disease are the leading cause of surgery in children, and among the most common reasons for pediatric day surgery requiring general anesthesia.

The HSO program, by preventing and treating dental disease early, reduces more severe impacts on children and relieves the health care system of the burden of treating complications.

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Letter

Healthy Smiles Ontario – Fee Schedule and Access to Dental Care for Children and Youth  
March 31, 2026

At approximately 40 cents on the dollar as compared with the Ontario Dental Association Suggested Fee Guide, the current HSO reimbursement structure deters provider participation and has created a province-wide access challenge, leaving many families struggling to obtain timely dental treatment. While some families who are eligible for the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP) can use it as a co-benefit mitigating this cost barrier, many families are not eligible for the CDCP.

Preventive oral health care for children reduces avoidable emergency department visits, limits progression to more complex and costly treatment, and supports school attendance and parental workforce participation. These upstream investments reduce downstream pressures on both the health and social service systems.

We respectfully request that the Ministry update the HSO Schedule of Dental Services and Fees to ensure appropriate funding, increased provider capacity, and equitable access to dental care for children and youth across Ontario.

This request builds on the government's strong leadership in improving access to dental care for seniors, now extending it to children. It also aligns with the Government of Ontario's stated priority of improving outcomes for children through prevention and early intervention, and with its commitment to ensuring children have the supports they need to succeed and thrive.

We would welcome the opportunity for our staff to support this work in any way helpful, including by sharing local insights on access challenges and opportunities for effective implementation.

Sincerely,



Mark Signoretti  
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Dr. M. M. Hirji, Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer  
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario  
Dr. David A. Brown, Chair, Board of Directors and President, Ontario Dental  
Association  
Ontario Boards of Health

**Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts**  
**Resolution #15-26 | February 19, 2026**

***Healthy Smiles Ontario Fee Schedule and Access to Dental Care for Children and Youth***

**WHEREAS** children and youth in Ontario face significant barriers in accessing dental care through the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program due to a fee schedule that results in reduced provider participation; and

**WHEREAS** acceptance of the Healthy Smiles Ontario program is at the discretion of individual dental providers, and many dental offices choose not to participate because reimbursement rates under the HSO Schedule of Dental Services and Fees are substantially lower than those outlined in the 2025 Ontario Dental Association (ODA) Suggested Fee Guide for General Practitioners; and

**WHEREAS** delayed or untreated dental issues can lead to pain, impaired concentration and school performance, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns, permanent tooth damage, the need for surgery under general anesthesia, and, in the most severe cases, life-threatening conditions; and

**WHEREAS** early prevention and timely detection of oral health issues significantly improve health outcomes and reduce strain on the health care system;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Board of Health requests the Ministry of Health increase reimbursement rates outlined in the Healthy Smiles Ontario Schedule of Dental Services and Fees for dental providers so that they align with the 2026 Ontario Dental Association Suggested Fee Guide for General Practitioners, in order to encourage provider participation and improve access to dental care for children and youth; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Board directs the Acting Medical Officer of Health to engage in cross-agency collaboration with other local public health agencies and undertake agency-level advocacy to strengthen the case for improved Healthy Smiles Ontario fee scheduling.