



**To:** Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee  
**From:** Stuart Beumer, Director of Ontario Works  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 14, 2023  
**Subject:** **Modernization and Agreement Renewal of Dental Benefits Administration**

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### **Background:**

Adult individuals in receipt of Ontario Works assistance are provided with emergency dental coverage for services that they require. This is generally limited to procedures to address issues related to tooth decay or pain. Services are also further limited by a normal annual maximum coverage of \$1000 per client. On a monthly basis each Ontario Works household receives a Dental Card listing all adult household members as part of their monthly statement of assistance. This card, in conjunction with supporting identification, is used with their dental provider to confirm eligibility.

In the year 2000, the County entered into an agreement with the Ontario Dental Association (ODA) to administer the Ontario Works dental plan with dental providers. This agreement required the ODA to complete the following services:

- Validating of client eligibility for services.
- Reviewing of claims from dental providers to ensure services performed are eligible.
- Making payments to dental providers in accordance with the terms of the dental plan.
- Submitting of monthly reporting and invoicing to the County detailing services provided and amounts paid.

The agreement between the County and the ODA was subsequently assigned to AccertaClaim Servcorp Inc. (Accerta) when the ODA established Accerta as a stand-alone corporation. This original agreement between the County and Accerta continues to be in place.

### **Modernizing Dental Services and Supporting Paperless Monthly Statements:**

The Ontario Works division is working to modernize the administration of dental services and further support paperless service options. A project team involving staff from the County (Ontario Works, Information Technology, Information Management and Treasury), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and Accerta are working to implement the following enhancements by early August of this year:

- Adoption of Accerta's online eligibility verification portal as the process for dental providers to confirm Ontario Works client eligibility for benefits.
- Removal of the paper dental card from the monthly Statement of Assistance sent to each Ontario Works household.

- Enable clients who are registered for the MyBenefits App to select a paperless option for receiving their monthly benefit statement.

These enhancements are anticipated to have several benefits, including the following:

- Allowing clients and dental providers to verify eligibility in real-time and at all times of the day.
- Significant reductions in client calls and Ontario Works staff time to replace paper cards.
- Fewer inquiries and less Ontario Works staff time spent on inquiries from dental providers related to client eligibility.
- Allowing clients to go fully paperless, with the ability to securely receive all of their information from our office electronically and be able to access it in one spot and at any time.
- Reduced printing and postage costs as clients take advantage of paperless options.

The project team is communicating with clients, community partners, Ontario Works staff and dental providers to ensure they are aware of the changes and how they can be supported if they have any questions or concerns.

### **Renewing the Agreement with Accerta:**

The introduction of online eligibility verification services through Accerta requires a renewal of the County's agreement with Accerta. The new agreement will include new and existing services, as well as other updates to modernize language and requirements that have changed since the original agreement was signed. The agreement will be structured to renew automatically on an annual basis, with appropriate termination and notice provisions provided to both parties.

### **Financial Implications:**

The inclusion of the online eligibility verification services in the agreement with Accerta is anticipated to result in an increased cost of \$3500 annually. In addition, there is a one-time \$3400 set-up fee. All other payment provisions of the agreement with Accerta remain unchanged. Cost savings related to printing, postage and staff time are also anticipated, although these are difficult to estimate at this time. All costs can be managed within the County's approved 2023 Budget and 10 Year Plan.

### **Recommendation:**

That the report, Modernization and Agreement Renewal of Dental Benefits Administration be received for information; and

That the Warden and County Clerk be authorized to enter into an agreement with Accertaclaim Servcorp Inc. for the administration of Ontario Works adult emergency dental services subject to review by the County Solicitor.

Respectfully submitted,



Stuart Beumer  
Director of Ontario Works