

RE: Windsor-Essex County Health Unit Oral Health Report

I have practiced dentistry in Windsor since 1980 as a licensed Pediatric Dental Specialist. I am no longer in full time practice but I continue in my role as the dental director at the John McGivney Children's Centre.

It is very difficult in private dental practice to accumulate supportive data for clinical observations. The Oral Health Report 2018 provides the data to support our clinical observations for the declining dental health of children in Windsor-Essex County.

For over thirty years I provided hospital dental services for over one hundred and twenty children annually suffering with advanced dental decay and limited cooperation. Over the last few years we have not only seen an increase in the number of children requiring hospital dentistry but a marked increase in the severity of their dental disease.

As a pediatric dentist, I can only comment on our pediatric population. There is a severe problem with early childhood dental caries in Ontario and the data presented to you supports an even greater problem in Windsor-Essex County. As a society, it is unconscionable that we have children walking around with dental pain and infection. This affects their development, school performance and school attendance. As a province, the cost of all this hospital dentistry and in-office specialty care is enormous.

We simply must do better.

As a council, you have to decide if you are prepared to accept the irrefutable data presented by the Health Unit and introduce community water fluoridation.

Dental caries is a multifactorial disease and arresting this problem requires a multifaceted approach. There are other additional preventive and treatment approaches which will be required to reduce the severity of this problem. It is not an overnight fix.

I know my letter will only echo the presentations of my professional colleagues.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of providing information for your discussions.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Thomas Oper

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