

Media Release

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April Is Oral Health Month

Access to dental care is difficult and sometimes impossible for many residents of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville.

Barriers faced by our community include transportation, accessible environments, fear of dentistry, and financial means. Fortunately, when it comes to financial means, 60% of the population in Ontario are covered by dental insurance plans but, for the other 40%, accessing dental services can be difficult to afford.

Medical studies show that good oral health is necessary for good overall health. Poor oral health contributes to lost school and work time, can result in severe pain and infection, tooth loss, inability to eat and speak properly, lowered self-esteem and in some cases severe illness.

A Few Tooth Decay Facts:

- It is the 2nd most common cause of school absenteeism.
- It is the most common chronic childhood illness, 5 times more common than asthma in children aged 5 - 17 years.
- Many working poor, low income citizens and seniors are falling between the financial cracks when it comes to accessing dental services.
- Tooth decay is preventable in almost all cases.

In response to the growing need, and to raise awareness about the access to dental care issues, Community Coalitions have been forming across Ontario.

Locally, the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Dental Coalition has been formed. Currently, the Coalition is comprised of community members, dental health professionals and representatives from the following organizations:

Country Roads Community Health Centre	613-272-3443
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit	1-800-660-5853 (613-345-5685)
Merrickville District Community Health Centre	613-269-3400
North Lanark Community Health Centre	613-259-2182
Smile Sensations	613-205-0555
Smiths Falls Community Health Centre	613-283-1952

This group is working to increase access to dental services and to improve oral health for all members of our community. If you would be interested in becoming involved in the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Dental Coalition, we would greatly welcome any support you can offer. To find out more about the Coalition, please contact your local Community Health Centre or the Dental Services program at the Health Unit.

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