Dave Dennis

'WHERE AM I GOING TO GET $2,000?': GOFUNDME LAUNCHED FOR HALTON HILLS SENIOR IN NEED OF DENTURES

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Two months ago, Georgetown senior Dave Dennis underwent a procedure to extract his teeth to prevent further pain and infection that could be detrimental to his heath.

The expense was covered under oral health through Halton Region.

After getting his teeth pulled, Dennis asked the next logical question: how much would it cost for him to subsequently get dentures?

The answer was a significant blow - $2,000 - a cost that Dennis says he is not able to foot on his own.

"Where in the world does a senior citizen who's on pension get that kind of money?" he said. "I have bills to pay ... I've got to have a roof over my head."

Typically, financial assistance is provided by Halton Region for emergency care to relieve pain, infection or trauma, Halton Region spokesperson Elizabeth Kosturik said, explaining how Dennis' initial costs were covered.

And while the region provides assistance for denture care for Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program recipients, for seniors like Dennis, that coverage does not apply. The program is meant to help those individuals get back to work, Georgetown denturist Joshua Kelly said.

Halton Region does have a Dental Care Counts Fund, which provides coverage for certain individuals requiring denture maintenance and repairs, Kelly added. But that fund does not provide assistance for new dentures.

Since his teeth were removed, Dennis has had to make a number of changes to his diet to ensure he is not consuming anything that he cannot chew, or anything abrasive that can lead to infection.

"I don't have any more pain. I don't have any more infections, which is a good thing for my heart," he said. "But right now, the only thing I can eat is soup, canned spaghetti and stuff like that."

Dennis' landlord and friend Laura Watson says she had watched him lose a significant amount of weight over the last couple of months and became concerned for his health and well-being, prompting her to launch a GoFundMe page to help raise money for Dennis to receive his dentures.

"I just think there should be some sort of program to help with putting teeth back in," she said. "It's a basic need."

To view Dennis' GoFundMe page, visit www.gofundme.com/dentures-for-dave.