

NEWS RELEASE

August 2, 2007

For Immediate Release

The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) Applauds Ontario Government for Provision of HPV Vaccine

TORONTO --The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) is very pleased with the Ontario government's announcement today of funding for immunizations against the human papillomavirus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer.

"This vaccine is safe and will save lives. Without the public funding announced by Premier McGuinty today, a family would pay \$400 per female child for the three shots required to protect them against HPV. This may be the beginning of the end of cervical cancer in Ontario," said Executive Director Linda Stewart.

Vaccinations are often cited as among the greatest achievements in public health, being safe and cost-effective measures of preventing death and disease from a myriad of infections. Thanks to early visits to the doctor's office, the vast majority of Ontario's children are immune to measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough). Many more take advantage of annual flu shots. Now, protection from cervical cancer will be offered to Ontario's children as well.

"Vaccination programs have repeatedly resulted in a reduction or elimination of infectious disease and remain the most cost-effective health intervention", notes Medical Officer of Health for Simcoe Muskoka, Dr. Charles Gardner.

This is a significant step forward for public health in Ontario, another signal that the government is hearing our messages that health protection and disease prevention must be top priorities in Ontario. alPHa looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the provincial government to help it realize its goal of making Ontario the healthiest province in Canada.

As the provincial organization representing public health, alPHa provides leadership and expertise on public health management issues. Its members include medical officers of health, board of health members and senior managers in public health disciplines including inspection, epidemiology, nursing, dentistry, nutrition, health promotion and business administration.

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