

11/25/2008

Hon. David Caplan
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Honourable Minister,

Re. HPV Vaccine Program Expansion

On behalf of the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa), I am writing today to inform you of our endorsement of the recent Toronto Board of Health Recommendations for strengthening Ontario's Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program.

As you may be aware, alPHa and COMO H have always held that safe and effective vaccines are among the most cost-effective interventions to decrease preventable mortality and morbidity. We also strongly believe that the Government of Ontario has a responsibility to fund and make available all vaccines licensed in Canada for administration to the categories of individuals as recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization through Boards of Health.

We also believe that the government has a strong role to play in developing policy and promotional campaigns to maximize the uptake of such vaccines to minimize the impact of the diseases that they are proven to prevent. The HPV vaccine has been demonstrated as extremely effective protection against the viruses that cause 90% of all cervical cancers, which is the third most common cancer among women between 20 and 49 years of age.

We therefore endorse the recommendations contained in the September 4, 2008 Report from the Toronto Medical Officer of Health, ***Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program***:

1. request that the Government of Ontario provide Long-Term funding beyond three years for HPV vaccination programs for grade eight females;
2. request that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care provide a short-term HPV catch-up program for females in grades nine to twelve;
3. request that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care establish a "once eligible always eligible" policy allowing females currently in grade eight to remain eligible to receive vaccine until they turn 18 years of age;
4. request that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care compensate local public health units for the full administrative costs of the program;
5. request that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care implement strategies to improve HPV immunization coverage among grade eight females;
6. reiterate its request that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care evaluate the HPV vaccination program, including surveillance on the rates of precancerous lesions and cervical cancers;
7. forward this report to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Minister of Health

Promotion, the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, the Association of Local Public Health Agencies, the Council of Medical Officers of Health in Ontario, Cancer Care Ontario, the Ontario Public Health Association and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

We thank you for your support of the HPV vaccination program, and are eager to assist you in strengthening it.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynn Noseworthy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

A. Lynn Noseworthy, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chair,
Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health

Copy: Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health (Acting)
Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, City of Toronto