

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

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**JAN 06 2009**

**Ministère de la Santé  
et des Soins de longue durée**

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**RECEIVED**

**JAN / 9 2009**

alPHa

Dr. Lynn Noseworthy  
Chair, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa)  
425 University Avenue, Suite 502  
Toronto ON M5G 1T6

Dear Dr. <sup>Lynn</sup>Noseworthy:

This letter is in response to your letter dated November 25, 2008 to the Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, regarding the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program in Ontario and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) summary of motions regarding this important program. You have provided several valuable suggestions regarding vaccine provision and program delivery for the HPV vaccination program.

The primary goal of the HPV vaccination program in Ontario is to vaccinate as many consenting and eligible grade 8 females as possible by ensuring that the vaccine is affordable and accessible within the school-based programs run by local health units. The first year of the HPV vaccination program is completed, and the Ministry commends each health unit for their hard work in organizing the program within short timelines. The first year of the HPV vaccination program was successful, as more than half of the grade 8 females in Ontario participated in the program and received the vaccine in order to protect themselves against future cases of cervical cancer.

In June 2008, an extension to the HPV vaccine program was made so that females who commenced the HPV vaccine series during the 2007-2008 year, will be able to complete the vaccine series during the 2008-2009 school year for free. Over the upcoming months, the Ministry will finalize the HPV program's first year coverage rates, and embark on reviewing the program including operational, delivery and other programmatic aspects to determine where program and policy changes are warranted. There are several aspects to this process that will need to be considered including an assessment of the financial resources available. At this time, the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program in Ontario remains publicly funded for grade 8 females. The Ministry will ensure that any new changes to the program will be communicated with local public health units.

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The province of Ontario recognizes the importance of immunization programs as a health promotion and protection strategy to improve the health and well being of the citizens of Ontario and will continue to assess and consider introduction of new options for publicly funded vaccine programs.

Thank you for your inquiry and continued support regarding this important initiative.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D Williams".

David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Chief Medical Officer of Health (A)  
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Health Protection

c: Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, City of Toronto