



## News Release

May 22, 2014

### **Missions accomplished**

*HPV Canada thanks its many volunteers for helping to open 12 school districts across Canada to the HPV vaccine*

With the positive vote on May 21 by the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School District headquartered in Leduc, Alberta, HPV Canada has reached a significant milestone: now all eligible children in Canadian public schools will have in-school access to HPV vaccination.

When HPV Calgary began its work in 2011, 12 publicly funded school districts in Canada had closed their doors to the HPV vaccine. A group of concerned citizens, physicians and health scientists formed HPV Calgary in 2012 to help the trustees of the largest district, Calgary Catholic School District, understand the significance of a vaccine that prevents cancer for children, especially for children of low socio-economic status.

On November 28, 2012, HPV Calgary accomplished an important first step. The Calgary Catholic School District lifted its vaccine ban. Within one month, and thanks to the resourcefulness of public health and school administrators nurses and support staff, the HPV vaccine uptake climbed from about 24.5% of eligible children to 61.5%. That means to date, more than 1500 additional Grade Five girls in Calgary received the life-saving vaccine.

However, in two provinces and one territory, there remained 11 other publicly funded school districts that banned the vaccine.

HPV Calgary became HPV Canada, a national organization with over 240 volunteers from Vancouver to Halifax, including citizens, parents, patients, health scientists, physicians and artists.

Over a period of 18 months, HPV Canada communicated extensively with the elected trustees of school districts in Ontario, Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Volunteers from HPV Canada have travelled to present to school boards in Burlington, Ontario; Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; and Leduc, Alberta.

“Parents help fund school districts and public health vaccine programs with their tax dollars,” says Juliet Guichon, assistant professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary. “All school trustees should assist parents in having easy access to health programs that help prevent disease and death. Parents have the right to consent or refuse to consent to vaccination for their children,” she adds.

Professor of Pediatrics Dr. Ian Mitchell says, “We congratulate the elected school trustees for cooperating with public health specialists to help children avoid one of the leading killers of adults.”

For more information: visit <http://hugyourkids.org>

Video summarizing efforts:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRGv6YrINZs>

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