



News Release

November 6, 2013

Halton Catholic schools open doors to HPV vaccination *HPV Canada thanks school board for putting children first*

HPV Canada is delighted to report that students in the Halton Catholic School District will now have in-school access to a vaccine that prevents cancer.

Yesterday, the Halton Catholic School Board voted to lift its five year-old HPV vaccine ban. HPV Canada welcomes this decision. The Region of Halton includes Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville, Ontario.

HPV Canada now calls upon the school district to help facilitate vaccination of many cohorts of students whose parents consent. The current grade eight students and the grade 9-12 students should now be granted access to in-school vaccination.

At last night's meeting, HPV Canada was the sole presenter to support the motion to lift the ban. Represented by two infectious disease experts from McMaster University, Drs. Fiona Smail and Mark Loeb and a professor from the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine Juliet Guichon, HPV Canada spoke to the trustees about the vaccine's safety and effectiveness.

Halton Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Bob Nosal, had addressed the trustees on same points on October 1, 2013. He told the trustees that only 20% of eligible girls in Halton Catholic had received the HPV vaccine - the lowest rate in the province.

HPV Canada's members are health scientists, professors of medicine, physicians, HPV patients, their families and other Canadian from Halifax to Vancouver. The volunteer group includes an Officer of the Order of Canada, Dr. David Scheifele of Vancouver, a past president of the Canadian Medical Association, Dr. Anne Doig of Saskatoon, and the Dean of the University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Jon Meddings and the Editor-in-Chief of Canada's leading pediatric medical journal, Dr. Noni MacDonald of Halifax.

HPV Canada has been spearheading a campaign to help educate school trustees about the benefits of the HPV vaccine, asking twelve publicly-funded Canadian Catholic school districts

to lift the ban on vaccination. Its experts send in total seven letters to Halton in June 2013 to ask the school district to reconsider its vaccine policy to help reduce infection.

The group has successfully helped inform 7 other school boards who lifted vaccine bans in Calgary on November 28, 2012, Yellowknife on May 15, 2013, Holy Spirit School Division (Coaldale, Lethbridge, Picture Butte, Pincher Creek, Taber, Alberta) on September 25, 2013, Medicine Hat, Alberta on October 8, 2013, and Red Deer (Innisfail, Olds, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, Sylvan Lake, Alberta) on October 8, 2013.

Remaining publicly-funded Canadian districts that ban in-school vaccination against HPV are:

1. [East Central Francophone Education Region](#) No. 3 (Bonnyville, Cold Lake, St. Paul)
2. [Elk Island Catholic Separate School Board](#) (Camrose, Fort Saskatchewan, Sherwood Park, Vegreville)
3. [Lakeland Roman Catholic Separate Schools](#) (Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Waskatenau)
4. [St. Thomas Aquinas School District](#) (Beaumont, Drayton Valley, Lacombe, Leduc, Ponoka and Wetaskiwin)

“HPV is a common, wide-spread infectious disease in Canada and around the world, causing devastating disease, and even death,” says **Dr. Charlene Lyndon, a Calgary obstetrician and gynecologist**. “My patients are always happy to hear that vaccination will protect their daughters from suffering HPV disease and treatment.”

The HPV vaccine is safe. In June 2013, the World Health Organization’s Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety, reported that “4 years after the last review of HPV vaccine safety and with more than 175 million doses distributed worldwide and more countries offering the vaccine through national immunization programmes, the Committee continues to be reassured by the safety profile of the available products.”

http://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/committee/topics/hpv/Jun_2013/en/index.html

The HPV vaccine is effective. Medical research demonstrates that HPV vaccination prevents the infection that causes cervical cancer, some anal cancers, as well as cancers of the penis, vagina, mouth and throat. A study published in the June 2013 issue of *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* revealed that since the vaccine was introduced in 2006, vaccine-type HPV prevalence decreased 56 percent among female teenagers 14-19 years of age.

<http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2013/p0619-hpv-vaccinations.html>

According **HPV Canada founder Juliet Guichon**, “the HPV vaccine became controversial because the virus is sexually transmitted. The role of health scientists to help inform school trustees will continue to be significant as new vaccines to prevent other sexually transmitted diseases that cause morbidity and mortality become available.”

HPV Canada is an independent, not for profit organization.

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

Media contact: Juliet Guichon, HPVCanada@gmail.com, 403.861.2471