



News Release

October 9, 2013

**Medicine Hat catholic school board votes
Unanimously to welcome in-school HPV vaccination**
HPV Canada thanks school board for putting children first

HPV Canada is delighted to report that the girls the Medicine Hat Catholic School District will now have in-school access to a vaccine that can help prevent cancer.

Yesterday, the Medicine Hat School Board voted unanimously in favour of lifting its HPV vaccine ban. HPV Canada welcomes this decision.

The national group has been spearheading a campaign to educate school trustees about the benefits of the HPV vaccine, asking ten publicly-funded Catholic school districts to lift the ban on vaccination. After focusing its efforts on Calgary from 2011-2012, the group turned its attention to nine remaining school districts.

The group has succeeded in Calgary (November 28, 2012), Yellowknife (May 15, 2013), Holy Spirit School Division (Coaldale, Lethbridge, Picture Butte, Pincher Creek, Taber) (September 25).

Medicine Hat is the latest school district to lift its ban.

The Ontario district of Halton (Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Halton Hills) has announced this month that it will reconsider its vaccine ban. A school district surrounding Calgary, Christ the Redeemer (Brooks, Canmore, Drumheller, High River, Okotoks, Strathmore) has considered the issue. We await news of the outcome.

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

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. [Red Deer Catholic Regional Division](#) (Innisfail, Olds, Red Deer, Rocky Mountain House, Sylvan Lake)
5. [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 come from rural and urban settings and, because of this virus, require colposcopy and painful biopsies. The HPV vaccination could help prevent this. 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>

“With the October 21 school trustee elections, Albertans have the opportunity to request that school trustees act in the health interests of school children,” says Juliet **Guichon**, title here. “We urge voters to question candidates about the HPV vaccine ban, and to vote for those who support protecting child health.”

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

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