Monday, April 10, 2017

Honourable Glen Abernethy  
Minister of Health and Social Services  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT  
X1A 2L9

Dear Mr. Abernethy,

The fact that the HPV vaccination program is set-up like a lottery system where only the boys that are lucky enough to live in certain provinces get to benefit from protection against HPV-related cancers is unfair and unethical. To remedy this situation, a gender-neutral HPV vaccination program needs to be established.

Toronto researchers demonstrated that a gender neutral HPV vaccination program would save the healthcare system between $8 million and $28 million over the boys’ lifespan, varying according to the efficacy of the vaccine and how many boys receive the vaccine. While we do not have statistics on HPV-related cancers specifically for Northwest Territories, we know that nationally, nearly 4,400 people will be diagnosed with an HPV cancer this year. When you know that a single treatment of an HPV-related cancer costs more than $200,000, it is not hard to calculate the cost effectiveness of vaccinating everyone regardless of gender.

Second, HPV-related throat cancers in men are currently on the rise. Unfortunately, many jurisdictions, where gender-neutral programs are not in place, are still demonstrating less than optimal vaccination uptake, reducing the impact of herd immunity.

All Northwest Territories boys deserve protection against the heavy burden of HPV cancers and the same access to this vaccine as neighbouring provinces. British Columbia expanded their HPV vaccination program in 2017 to include Grade 6 boys; Alberta included Grade 5 boys into their program back in 2014; and Saskatchewan has just decided to include boys in the HPV vaccination program. We strongly encourage the inclusion of all males, regardless of their sexual orientation, in the vaccination programs, and we recommend that, when feasible, a catch-up program be implemented, similar to that offered to girls, as to optimize protection amongst all boys.

HPV vaccination programs must be financially supported so that the entire male population can have equitable access to vaccines against HPV; especially since no HPV screening exists for men currently.

About HPV Awareness

Partnered with the SOGC and The Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada (SGOC), HPV Awareness is a national, bilingual, registered charity, the only one of its kind in Canada raising awareness of HPV, primarily through our educational tools & programs. Since 2006, we have provided HPV information throughout our Canadian school systems to students of all ages, their parents, and faculty. There is a huge need for impartial, age-appropriate, simple and precise sexual health education in schools and homes. We work to educate providers, parents and young people, by improving adherence to existing HPV vaccination programs.

For more information on HPV and our organization, visit hpvawareness.org.

Thank you for your time and attention to our recommendation.

Teresa Norris  
Founder and President  
HPV Awareness

Jean-Yves Frappier  
Vice-President and Medical Advisor  
HPV Awareness

cc: Dr. André Corriveau, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Northwest Territories Health and Social Services  
cc: Dr. Zeev Rosberger, member of HPV Awareness, Director, Psychology Division, Jewish General Hospital  
cc: Dr. Marc Steben, member of HPV Awareness, Medical Director, Clinique A  
cc: Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)  
cc: Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada (SGOC)