Monday, April 10, 2017

Honourable George Hickes
Minister of Health
PO Box 1000 Station 200
Iqaluit Nunavut
X0A 0H0

Dear Mr. Hickes,

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 Nunavut, 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 Nunavut boys deserve protection against the heavy burden of HPV cancers and the same access to this vaccine as neighbouring provinces. Manitoba expanded their HPV vaccination program in 2016 to include Grade 6 boys; Ontario expanded their HPV vaccination program in 2016 to include Grade 7 boys; and Quebec expanded their HPV vaccination program in 2016 to include Grade 4 boys. 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. Kim Barker, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Health and Social Services, Government of Nunavut
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)