Friday May 29, 2015

Mme Lucie Charlebois
Minister for Rehabilitation, Youth Protection and Public Health
Ministry of Health and Social Services
Catherine-de-Longpré Building
1075, chemin Sainte-Foy, 15th Floor
Québec (Québec) G1S 2M1

To the Minister for Rehabilitation, Youth Protection and Public Health,

The HPV vaccines are of the most significant cancer prevention breakthroughs, proving to be effective and safe for at least 10 years. Canada has proven to be a world leader in terms of providing vaccines very early to its female constituents. Now, federal, provincial, and territorial Canadian health ministers should show identical leadership in providing similar cancer prevention to its male constituents.

Partnered with The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist of Canada (SOGC) and The Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada (GOC), HPV Awareness is a National, bilingual, Registered Charity. Our organization is the only one of its kind in Canada, raising awareness of HPV primarily through our educational program. Since 2006, we have provided HPV education throughout all demographics and Canadian school systems to students of all ages, their parents, and faculty. There is a tremendous need for impartial, age-appropriate, simple and precise sexual health education in schools and homes. We see firsthand and say clearly that financial support, education, and equity of vaccination programs against HPV are essential for effective HPV prevention programs. We work to educate providers, parents and young people, by improving adherence to existing programs. Since 2008, the Quebec Cancer Coalition has been collaborating with us in our mission to spread awareness of HPV and improve HPV vaccination uptake and availability. We also work with ACCÉSSS bringing awareness to ethnic communities.

The HPV Awareness Corporation is hoping that Quebec is currently budgeting for the inclusion of all boys, as the recommendation outlined in the January 2012 NACI statement for boys to be included in the HPV vaccination school-based program. It is feasible to start this fall 2015 and to implement a catch-up program similar to that offered to girls. Let us remember that currently, provinces and territories are reporting less than optimal vaccine uptake in the female population citing various reasons.
We concur with The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) that says a gender-neutral program will also help remove the sexual stigma, which has impeded the optimal success of the HPV vaccination programs. It will also solve another issue that we are hearing and seeing throughout Canada, in every demographic, that the cost of the vaccine is a barrier for many families.

Vaccination programs must be financially supported so that the entire male population can have equitable access to HPV vaccination, especially considering men have no access to any HPV testing. Since HPV screening is not possible, it is important that all men have equal access to a prevention method. For maximum efficiency, it is even more important to include boys in the vaccination program so that they are protected as much as possible before they become sexually active.

A 2011 report predicts that by 2020, the number of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers will surpass that of HPV-related cervical cancer. It is very disappointing that only three Canadian provinces have set up a boys & girls’ program.

All Quebec boys deserve the same access to this vaccine, and protection against the heavy burden of HPV diseases in males.

Thank you for taking the time and attention to review our recommendation.

Kindest regards,

Teresa Norris  
Founder and President
HPV Awareness Corporation

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

cc : Dr. Gaétan Barrette, Minister of Health and Social Services
cc : Mr. Horacio Arruda, Director of Public Health
cc : Dr. Jean-Yves Frappier, Vice-President and Medical Advisor, HPV Awareness Corporation; Professor and Director, Department of Pediatrics, University of Montreal and CHU Ste-Justine, Specialist in Adolescent Medicine
cc : Dr. Zeev Rosberger, Medical Advisor, HPV Awareness Corporation; Director, Psychology Division, Jewish General Hospital
cc : Dr. Marc Steben, Medical Advisor, HPV Awareness Corporation; Medical Director, Clinique A
cc : Quebec Cancer Coalition
cc : Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC)
cc : Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada (GOC)