

March 31, 2008



The Honourable George Smitherman  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Smitherman:

**Re: Enhanced Public Funding for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program for Vulnerable Female Youth Utilizing Unused Funds**

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It is the position of the Board of Health of the Grey Bruce Health Unit that the publicly funded Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine program should be enhanced for specifically identified vulnerable populations, not indicated in the current program, including but not limited to female youth who(se):

- are in the care of a Children's Aid Society
- are in the custody of a detention facility
- parents prevented the initiation of the vaccine based on their own values
- were in transitional housing and unable to complete the series
- reside or have resided in shelters during their qualification time.

To that end, meeting on March 28, 2008, the Board of Health, for the Grey Bruce Health Unit passed the following resolution and we respectfully request your support of, and action on this matter.

**Resolution #2008-38**

**WHEREAS** the Government of Ontario has publicly funded HPV vaccine for Grade 8 females in the school setting during the Grade 8 year as of September 2007; and

**WHEREAS** Health Canada has approved the use of HPV vaccine, for 9-26 year old females, to reduce cervical cancer in women in Ontario; and

**WHEREAS** Grade 8 females are socially and developmentally vulnerable with respect to this health care decision, and may not be able to take advantage of this offer at the time it is provided in Grade 8 because of the influence of peers, family, and/or disrupted family circumstances; and

**WHEREAS** female youth who decline or miss immunization through the program in Grade 8 for reasons other than a mature choice, miss out on public funding if they subsequently choose immunization; and

**WHEREAS** the consequences of either not initiating or not completing the vaccine regime due to situations and circumstances, can have significant health implications, especially for high-risk female youth; and

**WHEREAS** the base price of HPV vaccine is approximately \$135.00 per dose, excluding pharmacy fees, which is cost prohibitive to high-risk female youth; and

**WHEREAS** a local committee including Children's Aid Societies and the Grey Bruce Paediatrician group have recognized this as a limitation with the population they work with and are unable to fund the vaccine for female youth in their care, and have recognized this as an inequity; and

**WHEREAS** the allocated funds for this program projected a vaccine uptake of 85% for Grade 8 females, the actual provincial uptake has been 53% for the first dose, thereby leaving funds and/or vaccine available; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Board of Health of the Grey Bruce Health Unit urges the Government of Ontario to utilize unused funds to provide immunization for the high-risk populations identified above; and

**FURTHER THAT** copies of this resolution be forwarded to Minister of Finance, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, alPHA, local Members of Provincial and Federal Parliament, all Ontario Boards of Health, and local organizations that work in child protection, for support.

Building Healthy Communities Together,

*Original Signed By*

Hazel Lynn, MD, FCFP, MHSc  
Medical Officer of Health  
HL/dl

Copies to:

The Honourable Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance  
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health (A)  
Ms. Allison Stuart, Assistant Deputy Minister (A)  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)  
Larry J. Miller, MP Grey-Bruce-Owen Sound  
Bill Murdoch, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound  
Carol Mitchell, MPP Huron-Bruce  
Jim Wilson, MPP Simcoe-Grey  
Ontario Boards of Health  
Local Children's Aid Societies  
Grey Bruce Paediatric Associates and Department of Paediatrics, Grey Bruce Health Services