

## **5**

### **PUBLICLY FUNDED HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINE**

**The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, September 18, 2008, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the York Region Catholic District School Board and the York Region District School Board for information.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

This report is prepared in response to Committee's request for an update on the first year completion of the school-based, publicly funded, vaccination program against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) that is being offered to female students in grade 8.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

**The HPV vaccination program was introduced and offered to all female grade 8 students in fall of 2007**

On August 2, 2007, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that the HPV vaccine was to be introduced as a new addition to the provincial publicly funded vaccination program and offered to all female students in grade 8 beginning in fall of 2007. Support for the HPV vaccination program has been received from several organizations and individuals including the Public Health Agency of Canada, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada and the Association of Medical Officers of Health.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

**York Region Public Health Branch collaborated with local school boards in the dissemination of information packages to parents, students, and school principals**

In August 2007, the HPV vaccination implementation plan was initiated in collaboration with the communications consultants from the public and separate school boards. The

consultants assisted in the dissemination of the information packages for parents/students and an information package for the school principals. The consultant for the separate board shared the information with the school trustees and facilitated the inclusion of the letter from the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops with the information package. This strategy has contributed to the smooth introduction of the program in the majority of schools throughout the Region.

An introductory education presentation was developed and provided by public health nursing staff to all grade 8 females. Attendance was voluntary and included students who consented to the vaccine as well as interested students who had declined the vaccine. This strategy was unique in the province and received excellent feedback from students through the surveys that were completed.

### **HPV vaccination program survey was conducted by the York Region Public Health Branch to determine how to best support the delivery of a school-based immunization program**

An HPV vaccination program survey was conducted in November 2007 by staff from the York Region Public Health Branch. The purpose of the survey was to determine how the York Region Community and Health Services Department could best support the delivery of this school-based immunization program, focusing on the needs and perceptions of the young women in grade 8 who would be potentially receiving this vaccine. In addition, the intent was to determine whether the supporting materials distributed to students were read by their parents/guardians; to determine if the HPV education session increased the knowledge of students immediately prior to receiving the vaccine; and to identify the major factors influencing their decision to receive or not receive the vaccine.

### **How well was the information received?**

A random sample of schools, including 10 separate schools (representing 258 students) and 21 public schools (representing 573 students) participated. A total of 652 surveys were collected over a four week time frame, with an overall response rate of 85.7%. Highlights from the survey include:

- 95.5% of separate school students and 89.2% of public school students indicated that their parents/guardians read the material.
- 57.9% of the separate school students and 62.2% of the public school students felt that their knowledge had increased as a result of the education session.
- 52.2% of separate school students and 46.4% of public school students felt the information sessions had a positive impact on their understanding of healthy relationships and choices.

### **51% of eligible York Region students participated in the HPV vaccination program**

In York Region, the HPV vaccination program was implemented primarily through school-based clinics. A limited number of small community clinics were available for students from schools that had either a low population of grade 8 females or had chosen not to have the vaccine offered through the school. The vaccine was provided in approximately 700 school clinics and 20 community clinics throughout York Region during the 2007/2008 school year.

As of June 30, 2008, 51% (3,400) of the eligible female students in York Region (7,000) had accepted and received at least their first dose of HPV vaccine. The acceptance rate of this new vaccine is similar to other vaccines such as the Meningococcal C and Hepatitis B vaccines in their first year of introduction in York Region. Although data for the three doses will not be available until the end of 2008, 53% of the eligible grade 8 females in the province consented to and received the first of the three doses of vaccine. The participation varied among all the health units in Ontario and ranged from 41% to 65%.

### **HPV vaccination program for grade 8 females will be continued for 2008/2009**

Initially, in order to qualify for the three doses of vaccine at no cost, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) indicated that students were required to complete the series prior to entering grade 9. Any outstanding doses would be at the parent/guardian's expense. In June 2008, health units were notified that students beginning the three dose series in grade 8 would be eligible for vaccine at no cost until September 2009. In addition, students would be able to receive the vaccine through the family physician.

There is potential for protection against genital warts in men and decreased transmission of oncogenic types of HPV from men to women. However, currently the HPV vaccine is not approved for males in Canada and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization is not recommending the HPV vaccine for males at this time. The volume of research on males is less extensive and the effectiveness of the HPV vaccine in males is yet unknown. Further research is underway.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The MOHLTC will continue to provide the vaccine free of charge for grade 8 females and reimburse public health units at \$8.50/dose to cover the delivery of the HPV vaccination program. The cost of the program for the first year was offset by the revenue and it is projected that it will be the same for 2008/2009.

**6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

With the introduction of the HPV vaccine it is anticipated that the immunized students in York Region should experience a lower rate of cervical cancer lesions.

**7. CONCLUSION**

The HPV vaccination program will continue in 2008/2009 for York Region grade 8 females on a voluntary basis. With the introduction of the HPV vaccine as a school-based publicly funded vaccine, a decrease in the incidence of cervical cancer is anticipated, contingent on the completion of the series and continuation of the program.

For more information on this report, please contact Dr Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health at Ext. 4012.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.