



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

JUL 26 2016

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Mr. Jesse Brown and
Ms. Katrina Jensen
Co-Chairs
Board of Directors
Pacific Aids Network (PAN)
PO Box 3102
Vancouver BC V6B 3X6

Dear Mr. Brown and Ms. Jensen:

Thank you for your letter of June 28, 2016, on behalf of the Pacific AIDS Network (PAN) regarding British Columbia's publicly funded human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program. I appreciate your interest and the opportunity to respond.

As with other provinces and territories in Canada, British Columbia considers new and improved vaccine programs for inclusion in the publicly-funded schedule using a number of factors to inform the decision, including efficacy, burden of illness, cost-effectiveness, feasibility of delivery and public acceptability. This process occurs annually through BC's Communicable Disease Policy Advisory Committee, which is chaired by the Provincial Health Officer. The Committee provides recommendations for new or improved vaccine programs to the Ministry of Health for consideration.

As you note in your letter, the province expanded its HPV immunization program to at risk males 9 to 26 years of age in 2015. The Committee recommended this program change based on evidence that shows targeted vaccination of this cohort is extremely cost-effective; it also offers protection to males who would receive little to no benefit from herd immunity generated through a female-only HPV immunization program. Recent analyses have shown that a universal male HPV vaccine program is not cost-effective at current vaccine prices, particularly in jurisdictions where female uptake of the vaccine is higher than 50 percent, as it has been in BC since the program began in 2008. In this context, the Committee has recommended HPV immunization for school-aged males be considered only if the vaccine becomes available at a price substantially less than its current cost.

I am acquainted with the risks associated with HPV-related disease among people co-infected with HIV; to date, the Committee has not recommended a universal HPV vaccination program for individuals living with HIV.

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It is my understanding that within the coming months, the Committee will be providing the Ministry of Health with updated vaccine and immunization program recommendations for government review. In this context, I expect the Committee will again review expansion of the current HPV vaccine program in the light of updated epidemiological data, cost-effectiveness analyses and vaccine costs among other factors.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "T. Lake".

Terry Lake
Minister