

January 14, 2015

Honourable Terry Lake
Minister of Health
PO Box 9050 Stn Prov Gov
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

RE: Broadening the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccination Program in BC

Dear Honourable Minister:

We are writing on behalf of the Pacific AIDS Network (PAN) to respectfully request that you consider broadening the current HPV vaccination program in the province. PAN works collaboratively to build the capacity and skills of our 50+ member organizations and people with lived experience, to effectively address HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and related conditions including HPV. We are asking you to consider implementing an accessible, free HPV vaccination program for all genders and especially for people living with or at risk for HIV and hepatitis C.

HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections. An estimated 75% of sexually active Canadians will acquire an HPV infection at some point in their lives in the absence of vaccine protection.

It has been known for some time that HPV can cause cervical cancer in women. Research now demonstrates that HPV is prevalent among gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM). The prevalence of anal cancers (80% of which are related to strains of HPV covered by the Gardasil vaccine) is higher in this population, especially in MSM living with HIV. Two studies have reported anal cancer prevalence in MSM is higher than the prevalence of cervical cancer in women. As well, people infected with any type of HPV have been shown to be twice as likely to contract HIV when exposed to the HPV virus.

Since 2008 an HPV vaccination program has become routine for young girls in BC. A broad, free vaccination program is not offered to boys or men. The vaccine requires three doses at a total cost of approximately \$450. Some extended healthcare plans cover the cost. However, the cost is prohibitive for those without extended health care.

PAN believes that providing a vaccination program to all genders, and especially to people living with HIV, will save future health care dollars. For those not living with HIV, the HPV vaccine can be one more HIV prevention tool in the effort to reduce the HIV epidemic in BC.

We sincerely hope that the Ministry of Health will consider our proposal. We look forward to hearing from you and are certainly available to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marcie Summers'.

Marcie Summers, Co-Chair, PAN Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Darren Lauscher'.

Darren Lauscher, Co-Chair, PAN Board of Directors

cc: Dr. Mark Tyndall, Executive Medical Director, BC Centre for Disease Control and Director, UBC Centre for Disease Control
Dr. Perry Kendall, Provincial Health Officer
Dr. Evan Adams, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
Dr. Bonnie Henry, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
Warren O'Briain, Executive Director, Communicable Disease Prevention, Harm Reduction and Mental Health Promotion, BC Ministry of Health
Gina McGowan, Director, Blood Borne Pathogens, Population and Public Health Division, Ministry of Health
Dr. Gina Ogilvie, Director, Clinical Prevention Services, BC Centre for Disease Control
Dr. Julio Montaner, Director, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
Chris Buchner, Regional Director of Prevention, Vancouver Coastal Health
Michael Spowart, Regional Director for the Public Health Agency of Canada, Western Region
Greg Oudman, Executive Director, Health Initiative for Men
Rick Marchand, Managing Director, Community-Based Research Centre
Jesse Brown, Executive Director, YouthCO
Ross Harvey, Executive Director, Positive Living BC Society
Dr. Brian Chittock, AIDS Vancouver