Memorandum To: Directors of Education
               Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of
               School Authorities

From: George Zegarac
      Deputy Minister

Date: April 21, 2016

Subject: Changes to Ontario’s Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Immunization Program

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has announced that the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Immunization Program is being expanded to protect more youth from HPV. I am writing to you today to advise you of the implications this update will have on school boards.

Currently, the HPV vaccine is offered free of charge in Ontario schools to female students in Grade 8. Starting in September 2016, the province will start offering the HPV vaccine to female and male students in Grade 7. These changes are supported by current scientific and expert recommendations, and better align Ontario with other jurisdictions in Canada. For the transitional 2016-17 school year, female Grade 8 students will still be able to receive the HPV vaccine in school-based clinics to ensure they do not miss the opportunity to be immunized.

The expansion of the HPV Immunization Program to include male students will help to protect them from key cancer-causing HPV infections. In addition, the shift to Grade 7 will help to harmonize the HPV Immunization Program with other school-based immunization programs delivered in Grade 7 (i.e. Meningococcal and Hepatitis B).

The HPV Immunization Program is a voluntary school-based program administered by local public health units. I encourage you to work with your local public health units to coordinate the implementation of this expanded immunization program in schools.

To support school boards and schools with implementation, MOHLTC has developed a fact sheet for parents available at www.ontario.ca/hpv.

If you have any questions about the updated immunization program, I would encourage you to contact your local public health unit or MOHLTC’s INFOline at 1-866-559-4598.
Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

George Zegarac

c: Frank Kelly, Executive Director, CODE
   Dr. Steven Reid, Director, Field Services Branch, EDU
   Regional Office Managers, EDU
   Director, Provincial Schools Branch, EDU