

FOR RELEASE  
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## **Yukon to offer free HPV immunization to boys**

Yukon is expanding its Grade 6 school immunization program to help protect youth from the human papillomavirus (HPV) and related cancers. Starting in the 2017–18 school year, Yukon will offer publicly-funded HPV immunizations to boys and to older at-risk males.

Since 2009, publicly-funded HPV immunization has only been available to girls in Grade 6. Expanding the school-based HPV immunization program to include boys is an evidence-based decision that follows scientific and expert recommendations, including Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization.

### **Quotes**

"Protecting young Yukoners is a priority for this government, and expanding our immunization program to include boys will help protect our youth from HPV-related cancers and other serious health problems. We believe that offering this program to boys is the right thing to do."

*–Minister of Health and Social Services Pauline Frost*

"HPV immunization is safe, and is proven to provide the best protection against HPV infection and its complications, including genital warts and ano-genital cancers. The vaccine is most effective before exposure to HPV, and the school program offers the best way to reach the most children."

*–Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley*

### **Quick facts**

- HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in Canada and across the world.
- It is spread by sex and sexual contact (including skin to skin). About three out of four people will get HPV at some time in their life.
- There is no cure for HPV. However, immunization can prevent HPV infection. HPV immunization prevents infection with the types of HPV that cause most cases of cervical cancer as well as other HPV-related cancers.
- HPV immunization is very safe. Side effects are usually mild to moderate and only last for a day or two. More than 200 million doses of HPV immunization have been administered worldwide.
- National Immunization Awareness Week (April 22 to 29) is held in the last week of April to highlight and recognize the importance of immunization.

### **Learn more:** Grade 6 immunization program

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