



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

June 13, 2016

Dear Catholic Parents and Catholic Educational Community,

In August 2007, the Government of Ontario announced the introduction of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine into the publicly funded immunization program for all female students in grade 8 classrooms. This year they will be expanding the program to include both males and females in all grade 7 classrooms, the grade at which the vaccine will be distributed from this point on. This is a voluntary program and parents have the final decision on whether their children will be vaccinated.

As Bishop, I want to affirm that parents have the right and responsibility to decide whether their children should be vaccinated. The HPV vaccination is seen by Public Health Officials as a strategy, in terms of allocating health care resources, to address the goal of preventing deaths resulting from various cancers, especially cervical cancer. I encourage parents to learn the medical facts concerning this vaccination and any possible risks it may involve for their children. The HPV vaccination program properly leaves the choice of participation to parents; the best interests of children demands that parents and guardians be fully informed before granting consent.

Infection with HPV or other sexually transmitted diseases can occur only through sexual activity. Sexual activity carries with it profound risk to a young person's spiritual, emotional, moral, and physical health. Sexuality is a great and powerful gift. Sexual activity is appropriate only within marriage. Outside of marriage, abstinence is the clear choice that leads to spiritual and moral wellbeing and it is the only sure protection against the risks of disease. Your values and expectations are important to share with your children; this is a perfect opportunity to take the time to discuss your beliefs and expectations about sexuality with your child.

Parents and educators want to prepare children well for their future in all aspects of their lives. A proper education in chastity helps young people to embrace their sexuality with confidence and joy.

If you as parents have questions or inquiries you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to call Teresa Hartnett, Director of the Family Ministry Office in the Diocese of Hamilton at 905-528-7988, ext. 2250.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,



(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton



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