



29 July 2008

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) immunisation programme update to boards, principals and education sector groups

In early May we sent you information about the Ministry of Health's Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Immunisation Programme that aims to reduce the incidence of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine will be offered to 12 year old girls (and all girls in Year 8 in school-based programmes) on an ongoing basis, with a phased 'catch up' programme for 13 to 18 year old girls.

The programme starts in September 2008, with vaccinations for young women born in 1990 and 1991, through primary health care providers. From 2009 and ongoing, vaccinations will be provided for 12 year old girls (Year 8 in schools), largely through a school-based programme. The remaining girls in the catch up programme will be vaccinated during 2009 and 2010, through school-based programmes and primary care.

The school-based immunisation programme

The Ministry of Health is working with district health boards to deliver a school-based HPV immunisation programme for 12 to 18 year old female students. The school-based programme will operate alongside primary health care providers and other non school-based settings.

The Ministry of Education is providing advice to the Ministry of Health on the current schools' operational environment; how to communicate most effectively, and work with, schools; and identifying potential issues and solutions.

Information and advice

Our aim is to ensure that school boards, principals, proprietors and education sector groups have access to all information necessary for them to facilitate the school-based programme and to allow students and parents/guardians access to the same information.

District health boards are currently drafting their plans for delivering the school-based immunisations from late in term one, 2009. While immunisation providers have been advised to avoid the first and last terms of a school year, the requirement that the three doses are given over a six-month period means that some programmes may need to begin in schools late in the first term.

District health boards/public health nurses will provide information to individual boards of trustees about programme delivery suited to each school and region, and subsequently discuss school implementation plans with principals. Boards and principals will need to address several factors when considering their school response. These will include access to a school's specific student roll information (student name, date of birth, ethnicity, contact address and phone number, and

school room number) and consent practices for the school HPV immunisation programme. Note: that no immunisations will be given without informed consent.

The Ministry of Education is currently working with the Ministry of Health to prepare information to help you with this. We are seeking comment from the Offices of the Ombudsmen and the Privacy Commissioner to give you additional information.

Funding support payment

To recognise the role schools will be asked to play in the programme, the Ministry of Health will provide a one-off support payment to participating schools as the programme starts. You will be given more information regarding this payment in term four this year. The Ministries of Education and Health will minimise any effort on your part to receive the payment.

With the immunisation programme intended to start in schools late in term one 2009, the Ministry of Health, through district health boards and public health nurses, will continue to keep you informed of the programme's plans, and give you realistic lead in times.

More information

For more information about the programme, email: HPV@moh.govt.nz and/or see the Ministry of Health website (www.moh.govt.nz/immunisation) and/or phone Robert Duerr at the Ministry of Health on 04 816 4451.

Kathy Phillips
Group Manager
Ministry of Education

Rayoni Keith
HPV Project Manager
Ministry of Health