



JUL 12 2016

Ms. Rita Hoffman
Vice President
Vaccine Choice Canada
rita@fastmail.net

Dear Ms. Hoffman:

Thank you for forwarding me a copy of your May 5, 2016, correspondence to the Ombudsman of Ontario regarding the complaint made by Vaccine Choice Canada about vaccination requirements and exemptions in accordance with the Government of Ontario's *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA).

As you know, immunization in Canada is a shared responsibility among the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. For its part, the federal government is responsible for regulating vaccines, monitoring vaccine safety, and providing evidence-based recommendations on the use of vaccines in Canada. The provinces and territories are responsible for funding, planning, and delivering immunization programs in their respective jurisdictions. Provinces and territories are also responsible for establishing vaccination requirements and enforcing mandatory school policies in their effort to prevent serious illnesses - including many that are easily spread in schools and daycare centres.

Ontario's ISPA requires that children and adolescents attending primary or secondary school be appropriately immunized against designated diseases, unless they have a valid exemption. Parents and caregivers who are looking for information about whether or not to immunize their child are encouraged to speak with their health care provider or a Public Health Nurse to discuss how best to protect children from vaccine preventable diseases. Some fact sheets and patient tools to help inform parents' decisions are also readily available on the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website:
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/resources.aspx>.

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As a physician and a mother, I believe in the importance of immunization as a means of keeping children healthy and safe. As the federal Minister of Health, I will continue to encourage Canadians to keep their vaccinations up to date in order to protect themselves, their families and their communities.

Thank you for sharing your concerns and views.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Philpott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping underline.

The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.