



### Meeting Information

Subject:	Vaccination Risk Awareness Network (VRAN) Teleconference with Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) representatives		
Date/Time:	Monday, February 24, 2014 1:00-2:00pm	Location:	Teleconference
Objective(s):	In response to a request from VRAN to speak with representatives in the Immunization Policy and Programs Section, Public Health Division, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the objective of this teleconference was to allow VRAN to express their concerns about immunization programs in Ontario.		
Note:	It was agreed by both MOHLTC and VRAN that the teleconference would not be audio-recorded. These meeting notes serve as the official record of the teleconference.		

### Meeting Participants

MOHLTC:	Dianne Alexander, (A) Manager, Immunization Policy and Programs Kevin Cherry, Strategy and Policy Advisor, Immunization Policy and Programs
VRAN:	Rita Hoffman, Vice-President, VRAN Edda West, Co-ordinator, VRAN Heather Fraser, VRAN

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#### Introduction:

Dianne Alexander began by summarizing the purpose and objective of the teleconference, which was to provide an opportunity for VRAN to express their perspectives about immunization programs in Ontario, in follow-up to previous written correspondence. All participants agreed.

#### VRAN Requests:

1. VRAN started by expressing the following: "My hope is to establish first that vaccines are a medical procedure with side effects that include death and we can agree to that from the start. In correspondence received from the MOH, it has been hard to get any kind of feeling that the MOH acknowledges that there are risks and damage from vaccines. Is that something we can all agree on?"

*MOHLTC Response: MOHLTC indicated that they would provide a response to this request in writing.*

2. VRAN expressed concern about the availability of information about exemptions from the immunization requirements for school attendance under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*. VRAN does not feel there is sufficient information on the Ministry's website regarding how parents can obtain an exemption, and was not able to locate the exemption forms online. VRAN raised the issue that individual rights under Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Consent to Treatment Act are being denied when individuals and

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parents are not given full disclosure of exemption rights under *the Immunization of School Pupils Act*.

*MOHLTC Response: The exemption forms are available online. The Ministry will provide VRAN with the direct links to the exemption forms following the teleconference.*

3. VRAN summarized its requests outlined in previous correspondence. Specifically, VRAN requests:

- Amendment of all publications and other information disseminated by the Ontario Ministry of health regarding vaccination requirements to provide information about the availability of statutory exemptions to vaccination requirements that is accurate, comprehensive, easily understood, unambiguous, and readily noticeable;
- Issuance of a direction (i.e., by letter or informal guideline) to all medical officers of health in the province, that they take immediate steps to ensure that their own publications and information regarding vaccination requirements and those of all school boards and schools within their territory, provide information about the availability of statutory exemptions to vaccination requirements that is accurate, comprehensive, easily understood, unambiguous, and readily noticeable;
- Design and implementation of an effective strategy to communicate accurate and comprehensive information as to the availability of statutory exemptions to vaccination requirements to all family physicians and paediatricians in Ontario;
- Inclusion in the *Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines* issued pursuant to section 7 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* of a clear requirement that all publications and other information disseminated by boards of health regarding vaccination requirements provide information that is about the availability of statutory exemptions to vaccination requirements which is accurate, comprehensive, easily understood, unambiguous, and readily noticeable;
- Amendment of section 38(2) of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to expressly require that physicians (and other persons authorized to administer immunization agents) and school principals advise parents and legal guardians of the availability of statutory exemptions to vaccination requirements and of the process for securing their informed consent (such an amendment may be analogized to section 22(7) of the Act which provides that an order by the medical officer of health under section 22 “is not effective unless the reasons for the order are set in the order” and other comparable sections of the Act);
- For fully informed consent to be obtained, parents should be advised in writing on the consent forms that there is no vaccine injury compensation in Ontario;
- Parents and students should be directed to where they can obtain a copy of the manufacturer’s package insert for the vaccine they are giving consent to. These inserts include contraindications, warnings and precautions, and adverse reactions so parents and/or students can be fully informed of all risks and benefits;

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- All health units should have clear and concise information regarding vaccine exemptions on their websites with links to the printable copy of Form 2 Affidavit with instructions on how to complete the form and where they get the form notarized;
- It should be made mandatory for health units to include clear exemption information in their press releases, print material, videos and when they are being interviewed by the media;
- The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should have a link to the “Form 2” exemption form on their website ‘Immunization: Your Best Protection.’ Links to manufacturers package inserts should be available as well.

*MOHLTC Response: The ministry has noted VRAN’s concerns and will take these comments into consideration as part of its ongoing monitoring and review of its publicly funded immunization programs in the context of continuous quality improvement.*

**Wrap Up:**

Both parties expressed thanks for the opportunity to meet. It was agreed that the ministry would take the lead on drafting meeting notes which would then be circulated to VRAN for review prior to finalization.