

## CCIAP Advocacy Key Messages

### 1. Strengthening immunization education and outreach activities

*CCIAP recommends development and implementation of a robust national communications plan with the main objective of educating and promoting immunization among health care professionals and the general public.*

Although CCIAP and its partners have been involved in developing national education and awareness campaigns for more than 15 years, including national poster contests, yearly influenza campaigns, National Immunization Awareness Week, and other educational and promotional activities, pockets of disparate education and outreach activities occur through different organizations across Canada.

A nationally coordinated, comprehensive and ongoing communications strategy created and implemented in collaboration with provincial/territorial governments, professional and non-governmental organizations to reach our target audiences - the Canadian population and Canadian health care professionals – is required.

A strong public relations component of the communication strategy would begin to address the gap between the current levels of public confidence in vaccines and the levels of trust needed to ensure adequate and sustained vaccine coverage.

A variety of health care professionals, including immunizers, would benefit from ongoing education, including specific practice tools and patient education support for different population groups. CCIAP could host a single website that would provide the evidence-based educational and promotional materials needed by immunizers in all health care settings, including correlated materials for each National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) statement.

#### **Impact Statement:**

A robust national communications plan would involve the dissemination of consistent education and promotion to the public and health care professionals, thereby increasing confidence in the safety and effectiveness of vaccines and, ultimately, vaccine uptake.

### 2. Harmonizing vaccine schedules across the country

*CCIAP recommends that dedicated federal funding be provided and leadership committed so that each provincial and territorial government has the ability to introduce the same schedule with consistent timing of routine and new vaccinations within their public health programs.*

Through our strong national network, CCIAP has become a trustworthy and independent voice which carries our key messages to federal, provincial and territorial governments in an effort to improve how vaccinations are delivered across Canada.

One tenet of the *Canada Health Act* is 'universality', which states that all insured residents are entitled to the same level of health care. CCIAP believes that this applies to immunizations and that all Canadians should have equal access to publicly funded, recommended vaccines.

The present 'patchwork' of vaccine schedules in provinces and territories across the country increases the risk of Canadians missing immunizations when they move from one province to another, thereby making them vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases.

## **Impact Statement:**

A harmonized vaccine schedule with consistent timing of routine and new vaccinations would potentially avoid missed immunizations when moving between jurisdictions, ensure equitable access across the provinces and territories resulting in reduced illness and hospitalization and overall costs to healthcare systems.

### **3. Implementing immunization registries**

*CCIAP strongly recommends implementation of a national immunization registry to gather vital data on immunization in Canada and be able to transfer that knowledge to increase prevention strategies and reduce treatment costs.*

A national immunization registry is critical to the overall success of immunization programs across Canada, as the vital data collected from a registry would be utilized, in part, to track the vaccination history of every Canadian, improve immunization rates and ensure Canada is better prepared to respond to a pandemic. A national registry is an integral part of the NIS, as several other aspects of the national strategy will be attainable or supported once the data is captured by a national immunization registry (i.e. targeted education and outreach; national goals and targets; addressing the needs of special populations; harmonizing vaccine schedules; vaccine safety; monitoring and surveillance).

A national immunization registry would consist of a network of linked provincial/territorial databases providing the systematic collection of immunization data, while maintaining the privacy rights of Canadians.

To borrow from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, immunization registries can be beneficial to everyone:

#### Health Care Professionals:

- Obtain a complete, accurate immunization history for a new or continuing patient;
- Produce official immunization records;
- Reduce paperwork;
- Manage vaccine inventories;
- Introduce new vaccines or changes in the vaccination schedule;
- Help interpret the complex immunization schedule; and
- Provide coverage data for health insurance plans and other national organizations.

#### Communities:

- Identify populations at high risk for vaccine-preventable diseases; and
- Target immunization interventions and resources efficiently.

#### Parents:

- Be notified when immunizations are due or late;
- Obtain an accurate, official immunization history for personal use and for daycare, school or camp entry requirements;
- Consolidate records for all immunizations a child has received;
- Help ensure that a child's immunizations are up to date;
- Help ensure timely immunization for children if families move or switch health care providers; and
- Prevent unnecessary (duplicative) immunization.

## **Impact Statement:**

A national immunization registry would increase the update of vaccinations, provide the data required to focus immunization efforts and position Canada to be better prepared for a pandemic.