

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

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May 12, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Immunization System Partners

**RE:** Proposed Amendments to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA)

Dear Colleagues,

In December 2015, Ontario launched [Immunization 2020](#), a new strategy to modernize the provincial publicly funded immunization program over the next five years. As a component of *Immunization 2020*, the Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, announced the government's intent to propose amendments to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA).

I would like to inform you that the proposed amendments to the ISPA have been introduced in the Legislative Assembly and have passed first reading. The proposed amendments are attached to this memo and will soon be posted on the Legislative Assembly's internet site in the section "Bills from the Current Session of Parliament" at: <http://www.ontla.on.ca/lao/en/bills>.

The proposed amendments include two key components:

**1. Strengthening the vaccine exemption process:**

- Parents seeking to exempt their children from the immunization requirements for non-medical reasons would be required to attend an education session delivered by a medical officer of health or her or his delegate before the Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief could be completed.

- The intent of this amendment is to ensure that parents seeking non-medical exemptions for their children are properly informed about the risks involved in not having their child immunized, and to better support them in making an informed choice.
- Specific details regarding the education sessions (e.g. content and format of the sessions) would be developed in consultation with public health experts and stakeholders.

## 2. Improving reporting of immunization records:

- The intent of this amendment is to streamline reporting processes by having health care providers report immunization records to their local public health unit for vaccines administered to children and adolescents against designated diseases. This change, if passed, would make it easier for parents and reduce unnecessary suspensions due to out-of-date immunization records. It is also expected to improve the accuracy and reliability of immunization coverage information.
- The specific information that health care providers would report, and the mechanisms to be used, would be specified in regulation and would be developed in consultation with stakeholders including primary care.

There will be consultation and opportunity for feedback on the proposed amendments throughout the process in which they are considered by the Legislative Assembly. If you have any particular comments or questions you would like to raise, please email them to the Immunization Policy and Programs Unit at [vaccine.program@ontario.ca](mailto:vaccine.program@ontario.ca).

I look forward to your input and engagement as we move forward with this important component of *Immunization 2020* to strengthen the provincial immunization system and better protect Ontarians from vaccine-preventable diseases for generations to come.

Sincerely,

*<Original signed by>*

Roselle Martino  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Population and Public Health Division