



ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE DES ÉVÊQUES CATHOLIQUES DE L'ONTARIO

June 2016

**A message to Directors of Education of Catholic School Boards
and to the Catholic educational community**

In August 2007, the Government of Ontario announced the introduction of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine into the publicly funded immunization program. This meant that female students in all grade 8 classrooms in our school system would be offered the vaccine. Effective September 2016, an expanded program will offer the HPV vaccine to both girls and boys in grade 7 classrooms. As in 2007, this is a voluntary program.

The Bishops affirm that parents have the right and responsibility to decide whether their children should be vaccinated. We encourage parents to keep in mind the following important consideration:

Infection with HPV or other sexually transmitted diseases can occur only through sexual activity, which carries with it profound risks to a young person's spiritual, emotional, moral, and physical health. The Bishops note that, at best, a vaccine can only be potentially effective against one of these risks, that to physical health, and may have other unintended and unwanted consequences. Sexuality is a great and powerful gift. Sexual activity is appropriate only within marriage. Outside of marriage, abstinence is not only clearly the choice that leads to spiritual and moral wellbeing, but it is obviously the best protection against risks of disease.

Parents and educators want to prepare children well for their future in all aspects of their lives. A proper education in chastity helps young people to embrace their sexuality with confidence and joy.

We ask that Catholic school boards include this message in the information package that parents receive concerning the program.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
The Catholic Bishops of Ontario