

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Expanded Provincial Immunization Program Offers Better Protection to Local Children and Adults

Rotavirus and Chicken Pox Vaccines Now Publicly-Funded

Today's announcement that the province is expanding its publicly-funded vaccine program is great news for children and adults alike according to the Peterborough County-City Health Unit.

"Thanks to this significant investment from the province, we can better protect local children from more diseases by improving vaccinations for them and the adults who care for them," says Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health. "These vaccines are safe, effective and proven to reduce disease across the population."

Starting this August, the province will offer two new vaccines as part of its immunization program, and expand the availability of two others. These include:

- A new oral rotavirus vaccine to protect infants against rotavirus, which causes severe diarrhea, vomiting and dehydration
- A combined Measles-Mumps-Rubella-Varicella (MMRV) vaccine that will reduce the number of immunizations a child needs. Varicella (chicken pox) is currently given as a stand-alone vaccine
- A second childhood dose of varicella vaccine to enhance protection against chicken pox
- A lifetime dose of pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine to adults age 19-64, who often pass this highly-contagious disease to infants and children.

Once the vaccine is received at the Health Unit, it will be distributed to health care providers to immunize their clients.

This expanded immunization program marks the first time ever that the new oral rotavirus vaccine has been publicly funded for children. Since 1995, 14 rotavirus

NEWS RELEASE

Communications Office

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outbreaks have occurred in Peterborough County and City. One outbreak was in the hospital, six in daycares and seven in long term care facilities.

Approximately 140,000 infants annually across the province will benefit from the rotavirus vaccine and many other children and adults will benefit from the expanded vaccine programs.

For information on these vaccines, visit www.pcchu.ca.

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