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CORRECTION NOTICE

Due to circumstance beyond our control, the **Fog Solution Liquid** (#1817628) advertised in our Anniversary flyer (ending October 4th) will not be available.

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Grade 8 Catholic girls can get access to HPV vaccine— with parental consent

MELANIE CUMMINGS
Special to The IFP

Grade 8 girls in Halton's Catholic schools will have access to a free vaccine protecting them against cervical cancer, so long as they have written consent from their parents.

Tuesday night (Sept. 18) the Halton Catholic District School Board narrowly turned down Oakville Trustee Anthony Danko's proposal to ban the region's public health department from stepping on school property to administer the vaccine.

Instead, five of the seven trustees opted to send home with each of the board's female Grade 8 students an information package about the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the vaccine and a letter from the Bishop of the Hamilton Diocese, Anthony Tonnos, that states "parents have the final decision on whether their daughters will be vaccinated." (Danko abstained from voting and Oakville trustee Ed Vianna opposed the recommendation.)

Halton Hills Trustee Rosanna Palmieri voted against Danko's proposal and was one of the five trustees who supported the motion that passed.

Trustees also demanded parents sign consent forms and a waiver of liability absolving the Halton Catholic District School Board of any present and future liability regarding the administration of the vaccine on school property.

Trustees also want written assurance from the Region's Public Health Department that they won't allow students to override a parents decision not administer the vaccine.

According to Milton trustee Rev. Dave Wilhelm, who was opposed to the ban proposed by Danko, "If this (vaccine) was so morally reprehensible, the Bishop would have

come out and said 'no'."

And Burlington trustee Joanne Matters added, "I'm not sure a vaccine meant to prevent illness is a Catholic issue. At the end of the day this is the parents' decision."

Board chair Alice Anne LeMay added, "It is not the job of trustees to be judge and jury of the vaccine, but to decide whether our schools should be the host sites."

In July, The Ontario government announced that it would foot the cost of the \$400 per student bill to vaccinate all Grade 8 girls in the province.

The drug, called Gardasil, is injected in three doses over six months and prevents HPV strains 16 and 18, which are responsible for 70 per cent of cervical cancer cases.

Halton launched the vaccination program in public schools this week, offering it to the region's 3,000 Grade 8 girls.

A letter addressed to Halton trustees from Dr. Guylaine Lefebvre, the president of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada also stated that HPV is "...one of the most studied vaccines ever to come to the Canadian market."

The society also stated in the letter that the vaccination is most effective if it is administered before the onset of sexual activity and "there is no evidence to link preventative vaccination and sexual activity."

The letter listed some of health authorities that have approved the vaccine including the Catholic Medical Association, which states "The fact that HPV is spread by sexual contact does not render vaccination against it unethical."

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in Canada in women. Nearly 400 Canadian women die of the disease each year.

Officer faces discipline

Cop's gun, ammunition found

The handgun, ammunition and pepper spray stolen from an unmarked police car in Dundas earlier this week have been recovered by police.

The weapons were turned into Hamilton Police Service early yesterday (Thursday).

The trigger lock on the .40 calibre Beretta handgun was intact and all ammunition accounted for. Still missing from the car, which was taken sometime late Sunday or early Monday but later recovered in Dundas, is an ASP baton and handcuffs.

A Halton Police officer had parked his car in the Dundas neighbourhood Sunday evening and returned Monday morning to find it missing. The weapons had been stored in a steel lock box in the trunk.

Halton Regional Police Service's

Professional Standards Bureau has determined the officer contravened Halton Police policies and procedures.

"This is a serious incident that requires prompt disciplinary action. The officer will be held accountable," said Halton Police Chief Gary Crowell.

"This matter now goes before my disciplinary review committee to determine penalty."

The officer could be facing internal discipline including loss of pay and loss of time to charges laid under the Ontario Police Services Act.

The officer, a 22-year-veteran detective constable, has been reassigned to administrative duties pending the outcome of the review.

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