

October 2, 2020

Dear Directors of Education:

As you are aware the last few months over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic have been very challenging and we have all had to change the way in which we do our work. At the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) we have considered our community priorities, the provincial direction and our organizational capacity to make the difficult decision to restructure our work and the services we deliver in the school setting for the 2020/21 school year, as outlined below:

### **Vision Screening**

SMDHU will not be offering the Vision Screening Program for JK/SK for the 2020/2021 school year. We will be promoting the OHIP covered optometrist visit for children.

### **Oral Health Screening**

Oral Health screening in the school setting will be delayed this year to allow schools time to become accustomed to new routines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be reconsidering to resume the oral health screening program at regular points during the 2020/2021 school year to determine if it is appropriate to proceed with offering this service in the schools. Screening and fluoride varnish application continues to be available in our offices by appointment for children 17 years and under.

We have updated our website to reflect these changes.

### **School Based Immunization Program (SBIP)**

It is our intent to provide the SBIP program to catch-up current Grade 8 students (2007 birth year) who would have missed doses during the school closures this past spring. This service will be offered by appointment at one of our offices or through a request for vaccine by their health care provider. Grade 8 students attending virtual school will be invited to either contact us to make a clinic appointment and/or their health care provider to request the vaccine. A detailed parent letter will be provided for distribution to the Grade 8 parent community. Students now in Grade 7 will receive these immunizations in the 2021/2022 school year when we plan to offer the program to both Grade 7s and 8s as a means of ensuring that no students are missed.

Enforcement of the *Immunization for School Pupils Act* will proceed with notices being issued to students who are outstanding for immunization required for school attendance. We will issue up to two notices to students. Given the complexity of the school year, we are

❑ **Barrie:**  
15 Sperling Drive  
Barrie, ON  
L4M 6K9  
705-721-7520  
FAX: 705-721-1495

❑ **Collingwood:**  
280 Pretty River Pkwy.  
Collingwood, ON  
L9Y 4J5  
705-445-0804  
FAX: 705-445-6498

❑ **Cookstown:**  
2-25 King Street S.  
Cookstown, ON  
L0L 1L0  
705-458-1103  
FAX: 705-458-0105

❑ **Gravenhurst:**  
2-5 Pineridge Gate  
Gravenhurst, ON  
P1P 1Z3  
705-684-9090  
FAX: 705-684-9887

❑ **Huntsville:**  
34 Chaffey St.  
Huntsville, ON  
P1H 1K1  
705-789-8813  
FAX: 705-789-7245

❑ **Midland:**  
A-925 Hugel Ave.  
Midland, ON  
L4R 1X8  
705-526-9324  
FAX: 705-526-1513

❑ **Orillia:**  
120-169 Front St. S.  
Orillia, ON  
L3V 4S8  
705-325-9565  
FAX: 705-325-2091

not planning to enforce school suspension by principals for students missing immunization in the 2020/21 school year; but rather, will work with our school health team, school administrators and families to get students up to date on their immunizations.

We look forward to partnering with you to determine the best approach for clinical service delivery in the school setting during this unprecedented time. If you have any questions or need further clarification please do not hesitate to contact Cathy Thomson, Manager, School Health – COVID19 Response Program at 705-721-7520 ext. 7469.

Sincerely,

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

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