



September 19, 2019

HL9.2.41

Toronto Board of Health
City Hall, 10th Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2
Email: boh@toronto.ca

RE: Toronto Public Health's Strategy to Address Vaccine Hesitancy

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Health,

The Public Health Association of British Columbia (PHABC) strongly supports the strategy developed by Toronto Public Health to address vaccine hesitancy.

The World Health Organization recently declared “vaccine hesitancy” one of the top 10 global health threats for 2019. The re-emergence of diseases long thought eradicated in many areas are a result of an erosion of confidence in and knowledge about vaccines, largely due to the proliferation of misinformation on the internet. PHABC has been working with public health partners and education stakeholders in British Columbia and across Canada to address vaccine hesitancy through successful programs designed to increase vaccine literacy.

PHABC would be pleased to work with Toronto Public Health colleagues and stakeholders from the education sector in Ontario to support the successful implementation of Recommendation #4 from the Medical Officer of Health:

The Board of Health request all Toronto school boards and the Ministry of Education to adopt Kids Boost Immunity or develop similar curriculum on vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases for all elementary schools.

Kids Boost Immunity (KBI) is an innovative digital learning platform designed to raise literacy around immunization for children. Through a series of articles, videos and on-line quizzes linked to school curriculum in science, health and social studies, KBI encourages students from grades 4-12 to think about immunization in a global context by connecting local classroom learning directly to global giving. The more lessons/quizzes a student completes, the more vaccines they earn for children in another part of the world through UNICEF Canada.

KBI was first piloted in BC in 2017, and is now available to schools across Canada. Every school in Ontario could be reached using this free online learning platform. Kids Boost Immunity (KBI) is a Canadian health initiative made possible through a partnership between the Public Health Association of British Columbia, the BC Ministry of Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada. KBI is coordinated through the BC Centre for Disease Control.



Public Health Association of British Columbia

#210 – 1027 Pandora Avenue

Victoria, BC V8V 3P6

Phone: (250) 595-8422 / Fax: (250) 595-8622

staff@phabc.org

www.phabc.org

KBI uses quality learning materials already developed for school-age kids from credible and well established sources from around the world, and KBI also partners with other organizations to support new content development. New lessons available for Ontario elementary schools this year include how to prepare students for immunization day, critical thinking and evaluating online information, understanding the scientific method and global health issues related to vaccine preventable diseases. KBI is also working with teachers in Ontario to develop a new series of cross-curricular lessons for elementary school students based on the required learning outcomes of the Ontario curriculum.

‘For students, teachers, public health and children around the world, it’s a win-win-win-win. It makes learning fun while helping others, supports teachers in meeting learning outcomes, increases literacy and addresses vaccine hesitancy in the next generation, and helps kids around the world access vaccines.’ Ian Roe, National Manager, Kids Boost Immunity, BC CDC

KBI’s unique approach that blends local learning with a global cause is attracting provincial, national and international partners with shared interests in global health, vaccination, science/humanitarian education and innovative uses of technology for social change. Although many organizations at the local, provincial, national and international level are wrestling with the issue of vaccine hesitancy affecting vaccination rates in communities, the KBI on-line platform creates an ideal opportunity for educators to be proactive in how they communicate positive messages about immunization to families, and influence social norms around immunization for the next generation.

PHABC would like to acknowledge the important work of Toronto Public Health in developing a comprehensive strategy to address vaccine hesitancy, and we would also like to recognize the leadership of the Toronto Board of Health in moving these recommendations forward.

Sincerely,

Shannon Turner
Executive Director, Public Health Association of BC