

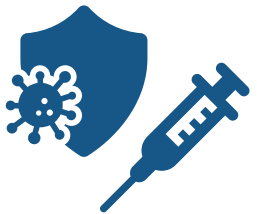
# Addressing Routine Immunization Rates Among School-Aged Children and Youth

Toronto Board of Health

November 18, 2024

# Background

- Vaccine-preventable diseases like polio and measles are rare due to high vaccination rates in Toronto
- A reduction in vaccination rates can lead to a resurgence of preventable disease cases and outbreaks
- Toronto student population's *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) compliance rate decreased during the pandemic
- TPH monitors vaccination gaps in school-aged populations and takes action to prevent outbreaks



# Immunization of School Pupils Act Program: Overview

## Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) assessment

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Meningococcal Disease
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Varicella (chickenpox)

# TPH activities to increase vaccination rates

- **School Immunization Program:** TPH provides meningococcal, HPV, and hepatitis B vaccines to grade 7 students in school clinics and community clinics
- **ISPA suspensions:** TPH notifies parents three times with letters and guidance about outstanding vaccinations and issues suspensions

Reaches 15,000+ students

900 SIP clinics

439 schools

85 community clinics

# TPH activities to increase vaccination rates

- **School engagement:** TPH School Health Team helps students achieve ISPA compliance by working with schools to prevent suspensions
- **Direct support:** Public Health Nurses engage families and principals with presentations, calls, and guidance resources for reporting student vaccination
- **Communications:** TPH delivers a city-wide public education and outreach campaign to inform parents and caregivers about routine immunization and how to report vaccinations



# Toronto students' ISPA compliance rates before and after the pandemic

- Pre-pandemic ISPA coverage rate % was high for grade 2's (78% in 2017/18)
- Coverage rates were reduced during the pandemic due to pandemic restrictions in vaccination services and pause of school clinics

| Cohort                    | ISPA Compliance Early 2023-2024 School Year | ISPA Compliance End of 2023-2024 School Year |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Non-TDSB grade 2 students | 33%   | 99%  |

# SIP vaccination coverage rates for Toronto students have decreased since the pandemic

| Cohort   | Hepatitis B | HPV   | Meningococcal Disease |
|--|-------------|-------|-----------------------|
| <b>Pre-Pandemic: 2017/18 Grade 7s*</b>                               | 77.2%       | 65.8% | 85.5%                 |
| <b>Post-Pandemic: 2023/24 Grade 8s (2010 birth cohort)**</b>         | 66.7%       | 61.6% | 73.1%                 |
| <b>Post-Pandemic: 2023/24 Grade 9-12s (2006-2009 birth cohort)**</b> | 55.2%       | 50.6% | 73.0%                 |

Grade 7-8 uptake: SIP vaccination rates for grade 7-8 students are higher than those in high school grades, reflecting the impact of TPH's school-based clinics

\*Coverage rate, as of August 2018; \*\*As of June 27, 2024

# TPH Boosts Vaccination Rates through Targeted Initiatives

- TPH **worked with Indigenous serving agencies** to increase vaccine accessibility and uptake
- TPH collaborated with Toronto CHCs and OHTs to enhance SIP/ISPA vaccination rates by **training community ambassadors and sharing resources** to improve access and awareness for families in high-need areas

# Equity-Focused Initiatives



- Multilingual, accessible communications materials
  - French
  - Spanish (Latin American)
  - Arabic
  - Tagalog
  - Mandarin
- Clinics in trusted community spaces (schools, libraries)
- TPH partners with community organizations to select communities with lower coverage rates

# Next steps to continue increasing vaccination rates

- TPH works with school boards, families, and students to increase SIP vaccination rates and ISPA compliance
- TPH does ISPA assessment and enforcement to increase vaccine preventable disease protection in Toronto schools and communities

**A real-time immunization registry would allow for improved data accuracy, streamlined compliance tracking, and the reallocation of resources to high-priority vaccination outreach efforts.**

# Recommendations

## The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health recommend the Ministry of Health implement the recommendation from the Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee to create a provincial immunization registry that provides real-time information access to individuals and their health care providers and includes sociodemographic data linkage capabilities to support interventions to address inequities in vaccine access.
2. The Board of Health request the Minister of Health to:
  - a. Increase eligibility for publicly funded vaccine and access to Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination for all people under 26 years of age; and as part of expanded public funding for HPV vaccination to all people under 26 years of age, the Ministry of Health request the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities to promote HPV vaccination access with postsecondary institutions.
  - b. Develop a comprehensive campaign to increase the uptake of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Hepatitis B, and meningococcal vaccinations, especially among communities with lower coverage of these vaccines.

# Thank you

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