



**Letter from the Chief Public Health Officer
National Immunization Awareness Week**

Dear Colleague,

The week of April 24 to May 1, 2010 marks National Immunization Awareness Week in Canada. As a health professional, I encourage you to take this opportunity to discuss the importance of immunization with your patients.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada than any other health intervention, and yet vaccine-preventable diseases still cause infection in groups that are not immunized, or those who do not have full protection.

Our latest estimates indicate that despite recommendations from the National Advisory Council on Immunization, children may not be receiving all of their immunizations on time.

We know that talking to patients about immunization and addressing parents' concerns about vaccines can be time-consuming, but we also know that as a health-care professional, your recommendation is one of the strongest positive influences on decision making about immunization.

To help answer your patients' immunization questions, the Public Health Agency of Canada launched a new website in June 2009 called *It's Time to Immunize*. This interactive site and its accompanying *Parent's Guide to Immunization* provides clear information to dispel common myths about vaccines.

National Immunization Awareness Week is a great reminder to take time to check the immunization status of your clients, recommend immunizations and provide the necessary information that will help patients make informed immunization decisions for themselves and their children.

We all have a role to play in protecting our communities from vaccine-preventable diseases. The Public Health Agency of Canada is pleased to work with the Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness and Promotion (CCIAP) to support national efforts to promote immunization.

Thank you for your continued contribution to improving the health status of Canadians.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Butler-Jones
Chief Public Health Officer