

December 22, 2006

Dr. Will Johnston
President
Canadian Physicians for Life
P.O. Box 1289
Ottawa, Ontario
K0A 2Z0

Dear Dr. Johnston:

Thank you for your November 22, 2006 letter regarding vaccines developed from the tissue of aborted fetuses. I appreciate the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Honourable Dave Hancock, Minister of Health and Wellness.

Assuring the safety and effectiveness of all vaccines used in Canada is the responsibility of the federal government through the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). All vaccines used in Canada undergo laboratory and field testing and must pass a rigorous licensing procedure before being approved for use in our country. Every lot is tested for safety and quality.

PHAC and Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) are aware that some vaccines are made from human cell-line cultures which were derived from embryonic tissue from three medically indicated abortions conducted decades ago (1960s). These cell lines are self-sustaining; additional abortions are not needed to sustain the vaccine manufacturing process and no abortions are conducted for the specific purpose of harvesting cell lines. Fetal tissue is not used to produce vaccines. Vaccine manufacturers obtain cell lines from certified cell banks to produce the vaccines.

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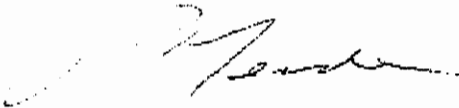
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Alberta Health and Wellness participates in a bulk procurement program with other provinces and territories, to ensure an equitable and adequate supply of vaccines for Albertans. Until recently there was only one product available to protect children against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and Haemophilus influenza (Pentacel®). During recent contract negotiations, Pediacel® was included and will be purchased as part of the bulk procurement program. However, this latter product will not be available through AHW until after March 2007 when our contract is renewed. This should not preclude the option of purchasing Pediacel® through a local pharmacist by individuals who wish to have this specific product used to protect their child.

As you know, vaccines are very safe and effective in preventing disease, disability, and death, but only when children and adults in a community are adequately immunized. Your continued support of these programs is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Paddy Meade
Deputy Minister