

You may write to provincial government about this resolution as a private citizen; you may state you are a CWL member, but you cannot state you are writing on behalf of a CWL council, nor can you write to government using League letterhead.”

Education and Health

St. Boniface/Mary, Mother of the Church

Resolution 2014.02 HZ (herpes zoster) Vaccine Coverage under Manitoba Health for persons 60 years and older

- Whereas** Currently, the HZ (herpes zoster) vaccine for shingles is not covered under Manitoba Health and the cost of the vaccine can be prohibitive; and
- Whereas,** The incidence of HZ increases with age and HZ vaccine is a safe and effective preventive measure for reducing the overall burden and severity of HZ in older adults; and
- Whereas,** The cost of treating herpes zoster and post-herpetic neuralgia could far outweigh the cost of the HZ vaccine borne through Manitoba Health; therefore be it
- Resolved,** That this resolution be forwarded through the national executive to the other ten provincial councils, encouraging them to become aware of the coverage of HZ (herpes zoster) vaccine cost as it pertains to their province/territory, and to act on it, as deemed necessary/prudent, and be it further
- Resolved,** That the Manitoba Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, urge the Manitoba provincial government to cover the cost of the HZ (herpes zoster) vaccine under Manitoba Health, for persons 60 years and older.

BRIEF HZ (herpes zoster) Vaccine Coverage under Manitoba Health for persons 60 years and older

Manitoba Health does not cover the cost of the HZ (herpes zoster) vaccine. "The vaccine offers a substantial effect and appears to be safe. Yet evidence shows that it is underused; in 2008, only 7% of potential recipients were vaccinated. This low coverage may be due, in part, to vaccine phobia, to the cost of the vaccine (about \$150) because it is not covered by insurance,..." (Watson 1713)

"Shingles is the name commonly used for herpes zoster, an infection that shows up as a painful skin rash and blisters, usually on part of one side of the body (left or right), often in a strip." (Public Health Agency of Canada) Post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN) is a common complication arising from the herpes zoster virus. "Although any person who has had chickenpox can get shingles, most people who do so are older than 50 or have a weakened immune system. The best protection from shingles is vaccination." (ibid) "...a vaccine for preventing herpes zoster and post-herpetic neuralgia has been approved in Canada for people 60 years of age and older." (Watson 1713) "The HZ vaccine is a safe and effective preventive measure for reducing the overall burden and severity of HZ in older adults. The vaccine appears to be cost-effective when administered to adults aged 60 years and older." (Canadian Family Physician)

"Herpes zoster is the most common neurologic disorder, and post-herpetic neuralgia is its most common and feared complication. In Canada each year, there are 130,000 new cases of herpes zoster, 17 000 cases of postherpetic neuralgia and 20 deaths. There may be loss of vision or even loss of the eye as well as facial scarring. Less frequent consequences include inflammation of the spinal cord, brain and meninges, and facial paralysis. Herpes zoster and postherpetic neuralgia will probably increase as the population ages; the incidence of postherpetic neuralgia rises from 10% among people of all ages to as high as 40%

among those 50 years and older." (Watson 1731) Shingles can also affect the nerves around the eye area in approximately 15 of every 100 people with the disease, occasionally causing reduced vision or even blindness." (The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia)

"Zostavax (zoster vaccine live; Merck), a new vaccine against HZ, was recently found to be efficacious at reducing the incidence and severity of HZ as well as the risk of PHN." (Hurley 216) "The use of the zoster vaccine reduced the burden of illness due to herpes zoster by 61.1%, reduced the incidence of postherpetic neuralgia by 66.5%, and reduced the incidence of herpes zoster by 51.3%." (Oxman et al 2271) Oxman also states that the zoster vaccine markedly reduced morbidity from herpes zoster and postherpetic neuralgia among older adults.

"People who are 60 years and older should receive a single dose of the shingles vaccine." (The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia) "Assuming the cost per course of HZ vaccination is \$150, probabilistic sensitivity analysis suggest that vaccinating between 65 and 75 years of age will likely yield cost-effectiveness ratios below \$40,000 per Quality-Adjusted Life-Year (QALY) gained, while vaccinating adults older than 75 years will yield ratios less than \$70,000 per QALY-gained. These results are most sensitive to the duration of vaccine protection and the cost of vaccination. In conclusion, results suggest that vaccinating adults between the ages of 65 and 75 years is likely to be cost-effective and thus to be a judicious use of scarce health care resources." (Brisson, et al)

"The incidence of herpes zoster could increase substantially during the next 20 to 50 years." (Watson, C. Peter 1713) "Of all five-year age groups, the 60 to 64 year old group experienced the fastest increase, at 29.1% (Figure 2). This suggests that population aging will accelerate in Canada in the coming years, as the large baby boom generation, those born between 1946 and 1965, reaches 65 years old. The first baby boomers reached 65 years old in 2011." (Government of Canada)

The number of older adults in Canada is increasing which would result in a larger population who would be susceptible to the herpes zoster virus as well as developing an associated complication, post-herpetic neuralgia. The cost of the vaccine is approximately \$150 or more. The cost of treating herpes zoster and post-herpetic neuralgia could far outweigh the cost of the HZ vaccine borne through Manitoba Health. People most affected by this disease are 60 years or older therefore, the provincial government is urged to include the cost of this vaccine under Manitoba Health. (Werier)

WORKS CITED HZ (herpes zoster) Vaccine Coverage under Manitoba Health for persons 60 years and older

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3. Drolet, Melanie, Brisson, Marc et al. "The impact of herpes zoster and postherpetic neuralgia on health-related quality of life: a prospective study." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 9 Nov. 2010 182(16): 1731-1736. Print.
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9. Watson, Peter N. "Herpes zoster and postherpetic neuralgia." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 9 Nov. 2010 182(16): 1713. Print.
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ACTION PLAN HZ (herpes zoster) Vaccine Coverage under Manitoba Health for persons 60 years and older

1. Write letters to the premier of Manitoba, minister of health and minister of finance with copies to your MLA urging the Manitoba provincial government to provide for coverage of the HZ (herpes zoster) vaccine for persons 60 years and older under Manitoba Health.
2. Become informed and aware of the symptoms of HZ (herpes zoster) and the complications associated with HZ, post-herpetic neuralgia.
3. Sponsor educational opportunities for members to learn more about HZ (herpes zoster) and post-herpetic neuralgia.
4. Monitor the government's plan of action in response to the request contained in the resolution.