We would like to explain how consent is obtained for immunization of school-aged students. In Yukon, the Care Consent Act requires that appropriate consent be obtained before medical treatment is provided—in this case, an immunization. Under the Act, age is not the main factor in determining if a person is capable of providing his/her own consent to medical treatment. The Act states that a person is capable of consenting to medical treatment (immunization) if he/she is able to understand and appreciate the information about and the consequences of consenting or not consenting to the immunization. The responsibility for determining if the person is capable of consenting to an immunization rests with the Community Health Nurse providing the immunization.

Although the Act does not identify a specific age of capability to provide consent for immunization, we have established the following guidelines:

**Generally**, adolescents aged:

- 13-year-olds and younger are not considered to have the capability to make decisions about immunizations and **will require** consent from their parent/guardian.
- 14-15-year-olds vary in their capability to make decisions about immunizations; consent from the parent/guardian is **recommended**. However, the student, if found to be capable, may be able to give or refuse his/her own consent.
- 15-18-year-olds have the capability to make decisions about immunizations. Parent/guardian consent will be required for students who are not capable of providing their own consent.

If your child presents at the health centre to receive an immunization without their parent/guardian and **does not** have parent/guardian consent at the time of the immunization, the Community Health Nurse may decide either to:

- proceed with the immunization if the nurse determines that the student is capable of consenting on his/her own and the student consents; or
- contact the parent/guardian to obtain consent, if the nurse determines that the student is not capable of consenting on his/her own. In this situation immunization will not proceed if parental/guardian consent is not obtained.

We encourage students and parents/guardians to review and discuss immunization information together.

On occasion, a student’s wishes in relation to immunization may be different than those of the parent/guardian. This could mean that the student does not want the immunization that the parent/guardian wants him/her to receive, or the student wants the vaccine that the parent/guardian does not want him/her to receive. In this situation, if it is determined that the student is capable of consenting, the Community Health Nurse will follow the wishes of the student. The Community Health Nurse will first ensure that the student is capable of consenting (or not consenting) on his/her own.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act provides that personal information relating to a capable person’s choices in health care is confidential. If a student is capable of providing his/her own consent to immunization, his/her decision cannot be disclosed without his/her consent.

If you have any question about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact your local Community Health Centre.