

HPV VACCINE IN GRADE 6: What is going well & what can we do better?

Early findings from a qualitative study in BC schools

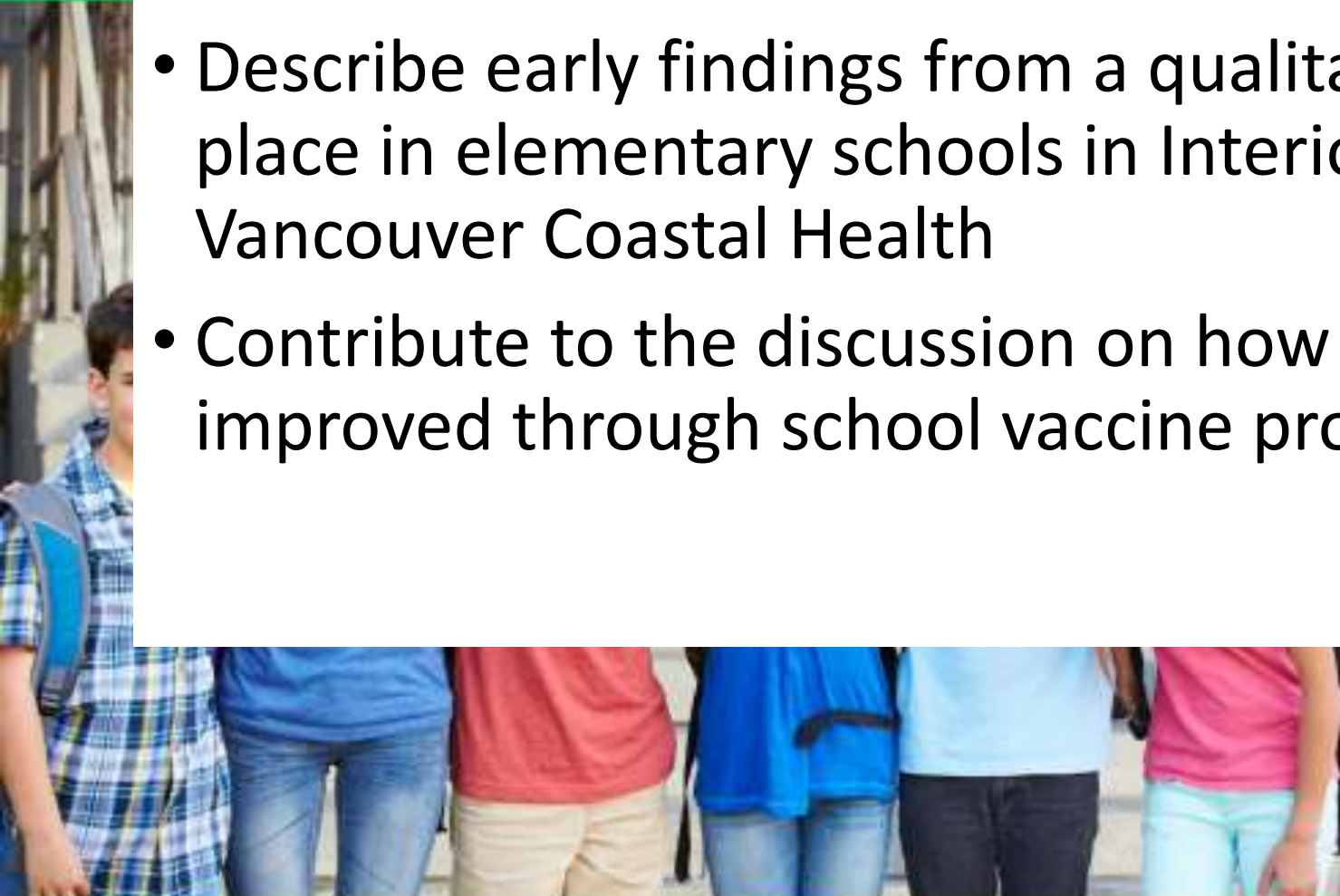
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Quebec National Institute of Public Health



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT

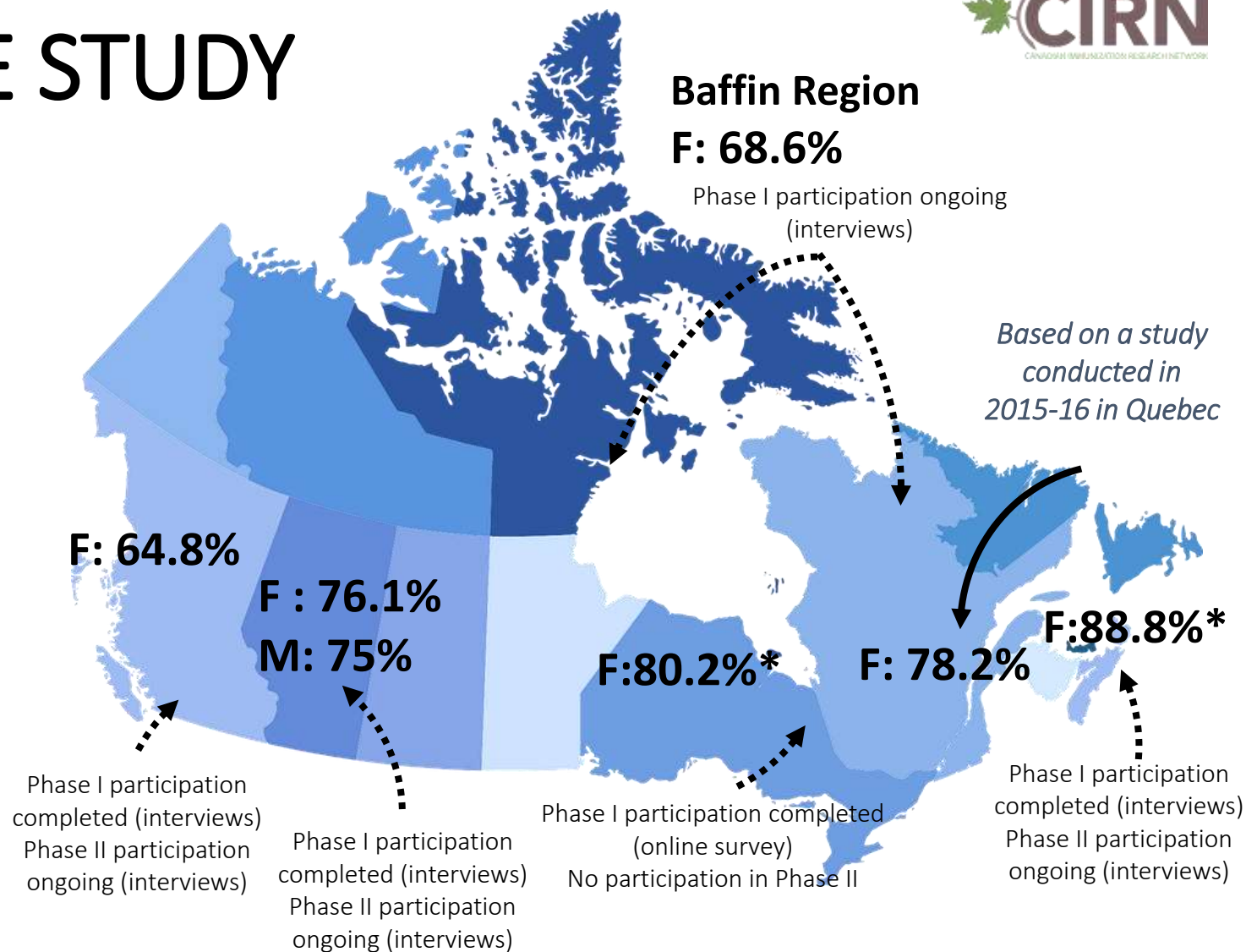
OBJECTIVES

- Describe early findings from a qualitative study currently taking place in elementary schools in Interior, Northern, and Vancouver Coastal Health
- Contribute to the discussion on how HPV vaccine uptake can be improved through school vaccine programs



PART OF A MULTI-SITE STUDY

- **OBJECTIVE:** to identify **barriers & enabling conditions** of HPV vaccine acceptance and uptake
- **METHODS:**
 - Phase 1: interviews/survey with immunization managers/leads
 - Phase 2: interviews, focus groups at schools



% of students who completed HPV immunization series in 2014-2015

*** ON 2012-2013 NS 2013-2014**

BC SCHOOLS ENROLLED IN THE STUDY

- 8 schools (Interior, Northern, VCH)
 - 7 public, 1 private
- HPV vaccine uptake below/at/above BC average*
 - * Girls 66.1% and Boys 63.5% completed (2019)
 - * Additional 11% partially completed (2019)
- Small town/remote, suburban, urban
- Students from high, middle, and low-income families
- 2 schools with up to 25% First Nations children
- 2 schools with many children from families new to Canada



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>

WHO HAS PARTICIPATED SO FAR? PHONE INTERVIEWS

- 7 principals/vice-principals
- 3 teachers
- 14 parents
 - 13/14 moms
 - 13/14 consented to HPV
 - Many had questions/wished for more information about it
- 2 immunization nurses



WHO HAS PARTICIPATED SO FAR? STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS



- 31 students (4 focus groups)
- Boys, girls, other
- Received or did not receive HPV in October
- Focus groups in other schools being scheduled

GRADE 6 SCHOOL VACCINATION DAYS:



2 doses HPV + catch up vaccines as needed



School Board level - MHO letter, information package



Information session for the School District/Principals



Planning for school day vaccine day started in September with the school

GRADE 6 SCHOOL VACCINATION DAYS – cont'd:

- Consent forms collected (nurses, teachers)
- Follow-up if not received (nurses)
- School vaccination day (x 2, fall and spring)
- Vaccination rates for the current year updated via Panorama
- Catch-up Grade 9



PHOTO CREDIT: Heather Hazzan, *SELF Magazine*.

CONSENT FORMS & INFORMATION SHEETS

PARENTS

- Many forms/emails from school
- Too much information? BUT ...
- Look through many info sources
- Wish for more targeted re vaccine-day
- Wish for more info re vaccine for boys

SCHOOLS (PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS)

- Yet another 'form to chase'
- Generally not familiar with the content
- Return rate lower: low-income households, parents separated, language barriers

STUDENTS

- Paperwork is for parents, not students
- How many shots?
- Interested in the content (nothing there for students!)

NURSES

- A lot of follow-up required
- Relationship with school
- Explaining the purpose of vaccines/- Kids Boost Immunity game
- Importance of resources in different languages

“

When students have that information, then suddenly there's that push to the parents to not be apathetic ... it is amazing to see how it empowers these 11 year old children to actually go and have a voice at home and say, 'No, I have to have this back at school.

(SCHOOL NURSE)

SCHOOL VACCINE DAY

PARENTS

- Makes getting vaccines easier
- Generally assume it went well

SCHOOLS (PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS)

- Logistical undertaking, “crowd control”
- Managing students’ fears/anxiety
- Focus on students being comfortable
- Having a familiar nurse helps

STUDENTS

- Afraid of pain/needles
- Feel their concerns being minimized by adults
- Don’t like surprises
- Would like to know what the vaccines were for

NURSES

- Logistical undertaking, “crowd control”
- Managing students’ fears/anxiety
- Relationship with the school/ support from principals and teachers helps



**My mom and dad didn't even tell me I was getting a shot ... so I was shocked when I came to school"*

*My nurse said she would count to 10 but I got a shot when she was at 3

**We got to play volleyball afterwards but our arms were sore*

*Having a therapy dog would help

**I have autism and I was really worried about getting shots, but it went well. And it's not even true that vaccines cause autism.*

*It would be nice to know what all those letters on the form actually stand for ...

(STUDENTS THOUGHTS ON SCHOOL VACCINE DAY)

HPV VACCINE PERCEPTIONS/UNDERSTANDING

PARENTS

- Primarily get information/opinions from other parents, family physicians, internet
- Generally know it “prevents cancer” and is linked with sexual transmission
- Perceived by many as a “newer” vaccine
- Often thought as a vaccine “mainly for girls”

STUDENTS

- Generally know it “prevents cancer”
- May/may not link it with sexual transmission
- May/may not be involved in the decision to be vaccinated
- Feel it should be discussed (vaccine knowledge/ sexual health) in school – Grade 6 appropriate level

SCHOOLS (PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS)

- Another vaccine in the schedule– may not realize it has been introduced for boys
- Generally know it “prevents cancer”, linked with sexual transmission – from their own reading/research
- Perceive uptake is higher than it is?

NURSES

- No HPV vaccine specific training
- FAQ cards developed when vaccine first introduced (not available for newer nurses?)

“

I was diagnosed with cancer related to the HPV virus. It made it real. And a lot of our friends, well, not a lot, but there's a couple of them that weren't going to do the HPV ... because they didn't believe their boys could get it. It was a girls' virus. Walking, living proof that no, boys can get it too. And their kids got vaccinated because I got sick.

(FATHER, SON IN GRADE 6)

“

I saw the WHO had put out a big push to get the HPV ... I think that that's a really good step in the right direction, to get everybody on board. But I just know that those other class actions still aren't resolved, so that's kind of what I'm waiting for. And I'll do my best to obviously keep an eye on that, and then when it's resolved or whatnot ... then I would go forward with my kids getting [HPV shots].

(MOTHER, SON IN GRADE 6)

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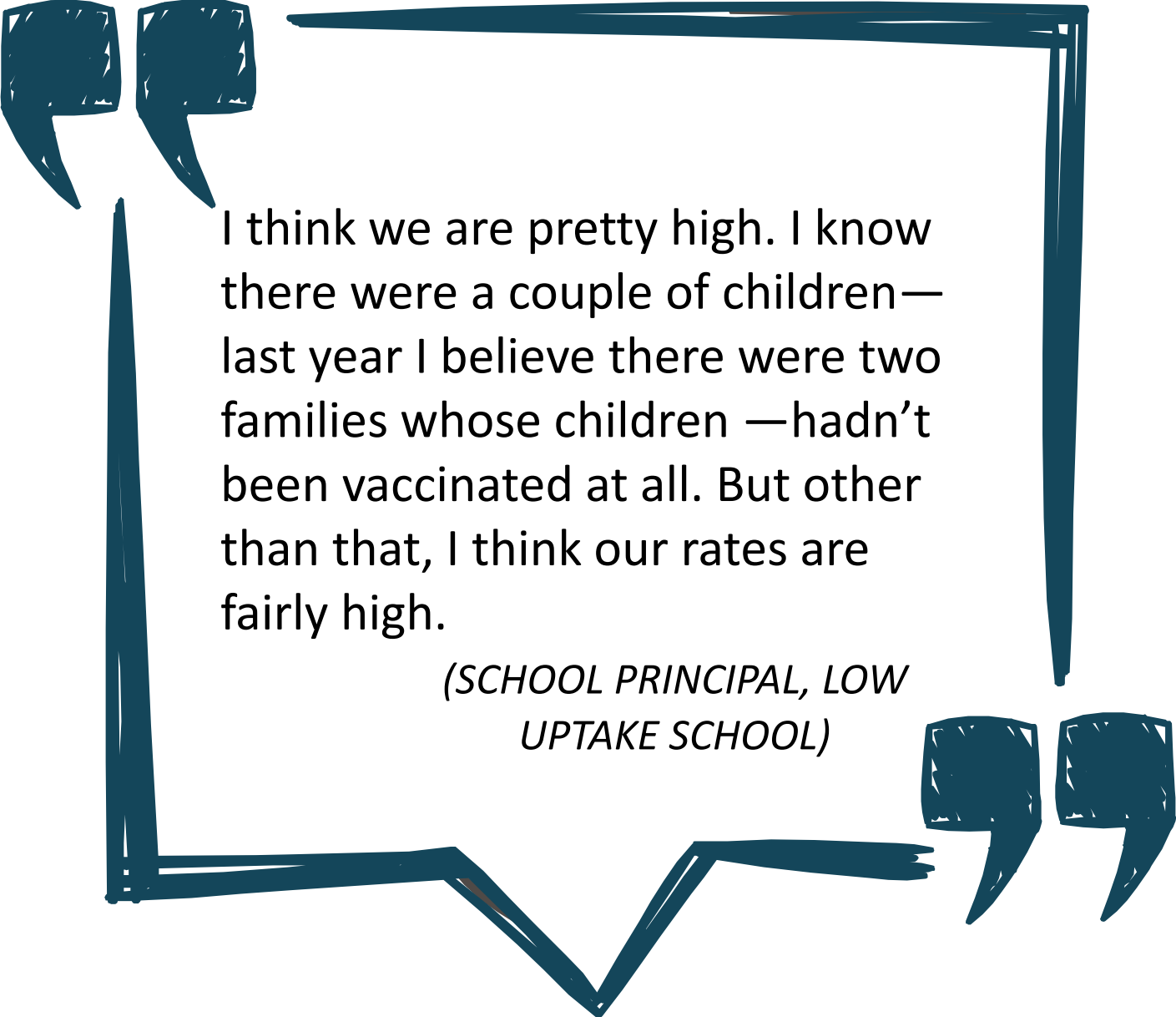
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I think we are pretty high. I know there were a couple of children—last year I believe there were two families whose children —hadn't been vaccinated at all. But other than that, I think our rates are fairly high.

(SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, LOW UPTAKE SCHOOL)

WHO SHOULD TALK TO STUDENTS ABOUT VACCINES

PARENTS

- Students care about needles more than about vaccines
- Knowing “what’s going in your body”
- Should be part of general education
- Students listen to teachers > parents
- Decision to vaccinate should be left with parents

STUDENTS

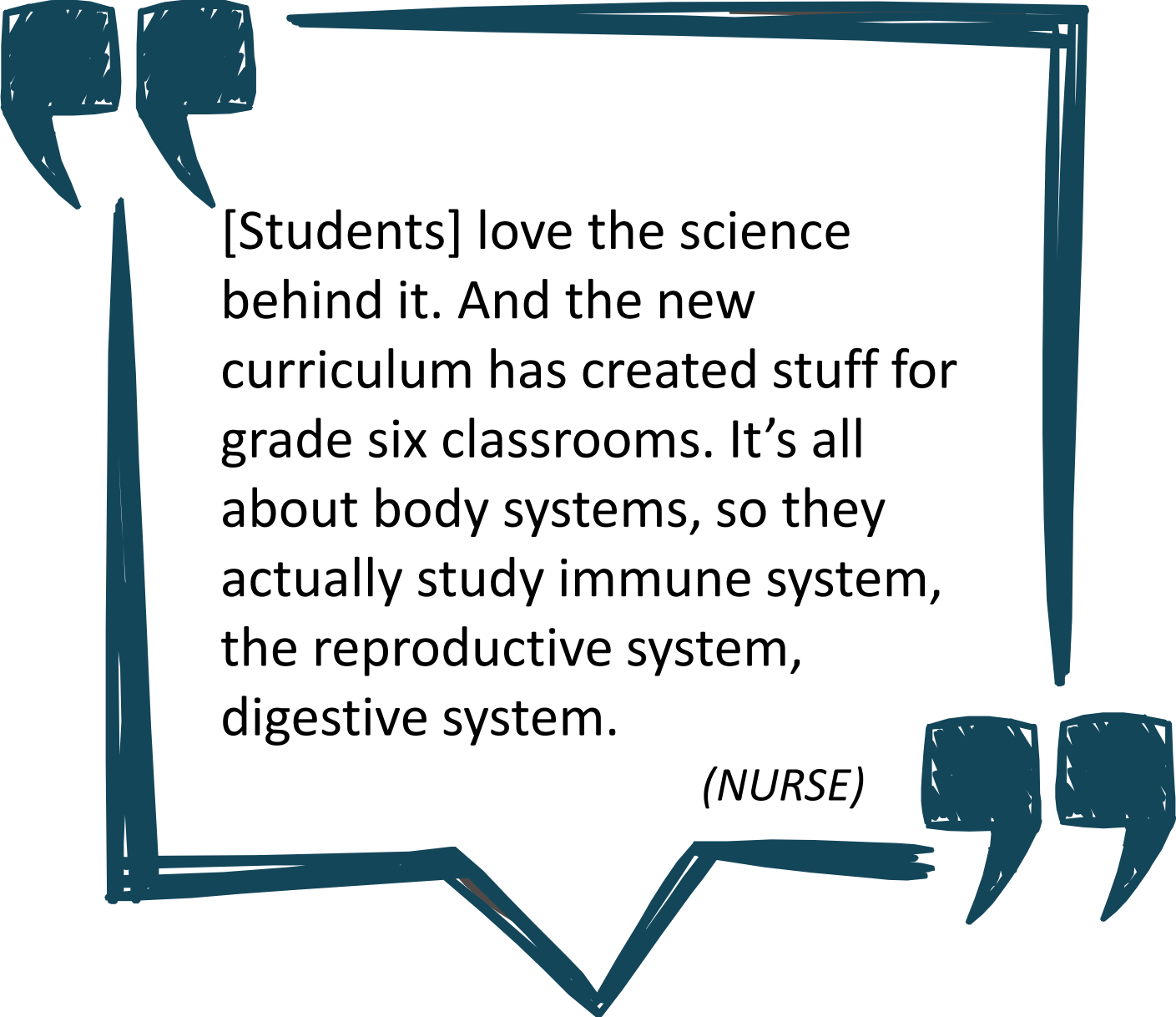
- Knowing “what’s going in your body”
- May or may not discuss with parents, family physician
- Would like to discuss vaccines in school
- “I Boost Immunity at home”? Screen time
- HPV – talk about sexual health at Grade 6 “appropriate” level

SCHOOLS (PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS)

- May/may not perceive vaccines should be part of curriculum
- May or may not feel knowledgeable
- “Kids Boost Immunity” good idea
- Fine line – schools should educate about vaccines but decision to vaccinate with parents

NURSES

- Not all nurses have relationships with school/ spend time at schools outside of vaccine days
- Talking to students about vaccine helps with getting consent forms returned



[Students] love the science behind it. And the new curriculum has created stuff for grade six classrooms. It's all about body systems, so they actually study immune system, the reproductive system, digestive system.

(NURSE)

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ... WHAT IS GOING WELL?

- **Big logistical undertaking** - smooth communication between health authority and school
- **Supportive nurses and school staff:**
 - Better experience for the students
 - More consent forms returned?
- Nurses being able to leverage relationships with schools
- **Resources** (though not necessarily utilized):
 - Kids Boost Immunity / I Boost Immunity
 - Immunization rates for each school
- **Shift to cancer prevention** rather than STI focus



WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?



- **Engage everyone** in the discussion (nurses, teachers, principals, parents, students)
- **Streamline consent process** so that forms easier to return (electronic forms?)
- Feedback to schools (and parents?) about immunization rates at their school
- Enable students to learn about vaccines and ask questions
- Enable schools to teach about vaccines
- Enable nurses to have relationships with schools beyond the vaccination day
- **Information for parents** – more, less, more targeted to specific questions?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT VACCINES (SHOTS) IN GRADE 6?



Vancouver
Coastal Health
Preventing illness. Promoting care.



Interior Health
Every person matters



northern health
the art and science of caring

