



Leeanna Pendergast, MPP
Kitchener-Conestoga

**Bill 2, Meningitis Awareness Day Act, 2010 Passes Second Reading
*An Act to proclaim April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day***

March 12, 2010

Kitchener, Ontario – Leeanna Pendergast, MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga, tabled for Second Reading on March 12, 2010, her Private Member's Bill, *Bill 2 - Meningitis Awareness Day Act, 2010.*

MPP Pendergast called on the Government of Ontario to proclaim April 24th in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day. The Bill passed Second Reading and has now been ordered to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Meningitis is a serious infection caused by inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis kills and maims children, young people and adults the world over. The disease has no boundaries based on wealth, colour, creed or country and is often mistaken for the flu.

Approximately 10 per cent of individuals who contract the disease will die. Of those who survive, up to one in five suffer permanent disabilities such as hearing loss, neurological damage and limb amputation. Meningitis spreads through close contact, with the bacteria being transmitted through coughing or sneezing, sharing personal items, such as eating utensils, kissing and close physical contact.

The Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada (MRFC) was established in 1998 to prevent death and disability from meningitis and other infections of the central nervous system. Through education the MRFC provides support to patients and their families affected by meningitis, increases public awareness of meningitis and promotes better understanding of the disease among healthcare professionals. The MRFC also provides funds for research into improved diagnosis, treatment and prevention of meningitis.

April 24 in each year is World Meningitis Day. Proclaiming April 24 as Meningitis Awareness Day in Ontario supports the work of the MRFC by heightening awareness of meningitis and dedicates a day to sharing best practices, information and research that are all essential to ensuring that no family loses a loved one to this terrible disease.

...2

PRESS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUE

Quotes

“A Meningitis Awareness day is a profound acknowledgment of the tireless efforts of Kathryn Blain, a meaningful tribute to the memory of her only son Michael Longo and a beacon of hope for the numerous other innocent victims of this horrific disease.”

- Michael Redfearn, Executive Assistant, Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada (Michael Longo's former high school teacher) and Technology Consultant, Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

“We are very excited about the events of today and feel that the declaration of April 24th being Meningitis Awareness Day will provide further opportunity to raise awareness of this insidious disease to families of Ontario. We are very thankful to Leeanna Pendergast for her initiative and passion in bringing this about.”

- Kathryn Blain, Founder and Chair, and Member of the Board of Directors of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada.

“It is my privilege to guide this Bill through the legislative process. I thank Kathryn Blain for her vision, leadership and commitment to the health and safety of Ontarians through the promotion of meningitis awareness. Kathryn is an inspiration to us all and we are a better province as a result of her work.”

- Leeanna Pendergast, MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga

QUICK FACTS

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LEARN MORE

- For more information about the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada <http://www.meningitis.ca>

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