

Advocating for Expanded Infant RSV Protection in British Columbia

The Healthcare Gap

Most provinces and territories in Canada are providing all-infant publicly funded respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) immunizations during the RSV season, but **families in BC do not yet have access to the same protection**. You can help close this equity gap by writing a letter of support to your MLA to encourage them to advocate for investing in a publicly funded infant RSV protection program for their constituents this season.

How to Advocate for Expanded Protection

1. Send a letter to your local MLA to raise awareness of the protection gap and encourage them to take action by advocating for public funding as a priority for their constituents. You can find your MLA's email address by [entering your Postal Code here](#).
2. Copy and paste the draft email below, personalize and send to your MLA

Draft E-mail Template

Subject: Prioritize RSV protection for infants by closing the equity gap

Dear **[MLA's Name]**,

I am writing as a **[parent / physician / healthcare provider]** in British Columbia to ask for your support in implementing a publicly funded RSV prevention program for **all infants** beginning in Fall 2026.

RSV is a leading cause of hospitalization in young children, and BC's own data shows the **burden for infants is significant**. According to the BCCDC Respiratory Virus Data and a study from the UBC Faculty of Medicine and BC Children's Hospital Research Institute:

- Children aged 0–4 years account for up to **50% of all respiratory-related Emergency Department visits** during peak respiratory season in BC
- During the 2025/26 season, pediatric RSV positivity rates in BC were approximately **3–5× higher than those observed in adults** during peak respiratory season
- Infants under six months account for nearly **50% of all RSV-related healthcare costs**
- Infants in remote and Indigenous communities in BC face nearly **3× higher hospitalization risk**, with almost half requiring air evacuation for care

Despite this, BC currently funds RSV protection for only **about 10% of infants**, leaving **over 90% unprotected**, even though **most hospitalized infants are otherwise healthy and full-term**.

There is strong Canadian evidence that prevention programs work. Quebec's universal infant RSV prevention program showed:

- **89% reduction in RSV hospitalizations**
- **88% reduction in ICU admissions**
- Only **41 infants need to be immunized to prevent one hospitalization**

Other provinces, including ON, QC, SK, MB, NS, PEI, NL, YK, NWT and NU, have already implemented programs to protect all infants, but BC remains an outlier. Most recently, Manitoba expanded its RSV program to cover all infants born at any time of year, ensuring every infant receives protection during their first RSV season. Newfoundland and Labrador similarly expanded publicly funded RSV eligibility to all infants under six months of age. These expansions reflect a growing national consensus that RSV protection is both a public health and fiscal priority, and British Columbia has a meaningful opportunity to follow suit to ensure no infant is left behind.

This is both a **health and equity issue**. Infants, including many from vulnerable and Indigenous communities, are at the highest risk, yet are the least protected under the current approach.

I respectfully ask your support in advocating that British Columbia approve a publicly funded RSV prevention program for all infants starting Fall 2026.

Timely action is critical. Delays will mean infants entering the upcoming RSV season will remain without protection.

Thank you for your leadership and for supporting policies that protect BC families.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Optional: Your role (parent, physician, etc.)]