

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Immunisation Rates

Question reference number: HS 64

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

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Question:

Child immunisation episodes have dropped from 5 million in 2012/13 to 4.7 million and 4.8 million in the past two years. What is DHS analysis of why this has occurred?

Answer:

An immunisation episode is the measure of vaccines (injections) given by immunisation providers. An episode is not a measure of immunisation coverage.

From 1 July 2013, two new combined vaccines were added to the National Immunisation Program schedule (NIP). These vaccines combined multiple vaccines into two new vaccines which resulted in a reduction in the amount of injections administered to children under the NIP, as set out below.

- Menitorix®, a combined Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) and Meningococcal serogroup C (MenC) vaccine for children 12 months of age. This combination vaccine replaced the single dose of monovalent meningococcal C conjugate vaccine (MenCCV) and booster dose of monovalent Hib vaccine previously scheduled at 12 months of age.
- Priorix-Tetra, a combination vaccine for measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) for children aged 18 months. This combination vaccine replaced the combination measles, mumps rubella vaccine (given at 4 years of age) and the single dose of monovalent varicella vaccine (scheduled at 18 months of age).

Combining these vaccines resulted in the requirement for less injections at these schedule points.