

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000018

Distribution strategy for the AstraZeneca and Novavax vaccines

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

What is the distribution strategy for the AstraZeneca and Novavax vaccines?

Answer:

The Commonwealth, through the Department of Health, has engaged two logistics providers, DHL Supply Chain and Linfox Australia, to assist with the distribution and logistics for the two approved COVID-19 vaccine candidates, Pfizer and AstraZeneca.

To date, the Therapeutic Goods Administration has not granted approval for the Novavax vaccine.

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Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000016

Determination of Pfizer or AstraZeneca vaccines for priority populations

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Which priority populations will have access to the Pfizer vaccine versus the AstraZeneca vaccine? How will this be determined?

Answer:

Both vaccines approved for use in Australia, the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and the Oxford University/AstraZeneca vaccine, have met the Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) high standards for safety, quality and effectiveness.

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been provisionally approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for individuals 16 years and older.

On 8 April 2021, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) provided advice recommending the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine is preferred over the AstraZeneca vaccine for adults aged under 50 years. This recommendation is based on the increasing risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 in older adults (and hence a higher benefit from vaccination) and a potentially increased risk of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia following AstraZeneca vaccine in those under 50 years.

Following the recommendation of 8 April 2021 from the ATAGI, the Prime Minister announced that the COVID Vaccination Program would undergo recalibration to ensure the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines in Australia is completed as safely, quickly and efficiently as possible.

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PDR Number: IQ21-000015

Choice of vaccines approved by TGA

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Will people be able to purchase any of the vaccines that are approved by the TGA (for example, if they want to access a vaccine that is more efficacious) in Australia?

Answer:

At present there is no proposal to have private market availability of vaccines in Australia.

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Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000013

Vaccine efficacy between AstraZeneca and Pfizer

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

When did authorities realise the differences in vaccine efficacy between the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines? How did this information impact decisions around vaccine agreements?

Answer:

The AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines are both highly effective to prevent severe disease and death from COVID-19 disease. Primary efficacy analysis of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine Phase 3 trial was announced by Pfizer on 18 November 2020 and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on 10 December 2020.

Interim results of the AstraZeneca/University of Oxford vaccine Phase 3 trial were published in *The Lancet* on 8 December 2020. On 19 February 2021, additional results of the AstraZeneca/University of Oxford vaccine were published in *The Lancet*, which showed vaccine efficacy (over 80%) and antibody responses were higher with a longer interval between the two doses.

Investments in vaccine candidates are guided by the advice of the COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments for Australia – Science and Industry Technical Advisory Group, and assessment of clinical evidence, including portfolio diversification and risk.

Both the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines have been shown to be very effective in the prevention of severe COVID-19 disease.

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Department of Health

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Written Question on Notice, 29 January 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000012

Local manufacturing capabilities and the decision not to secure more Pfizer vaccine

Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

What role did local manufacturing capabilities play in the decision not to secure more Pfizer vaccines?

Answer:

Investments in vaccine candidates are guided by the advice of the COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments for Australia – Science and Industry Technical Advisory Group, and assessment of clinical evidence, including portfolio diversification and risk.

On 5 November 2020, the Government entered an agreement with Pfizer for its vaccine. The Government made an additional purchase of 10 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine on 4 February 2021. A further investment for 20 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine was announced on 9 April 2021.