

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-172

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Gardasil

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Madigan

Question:

The Australian Government has strongly promoted the vaccination of young women with the HPV and therefore cervical cancer preventing vaccine Gardasil. There has been a report in the British Medical Journal, October 2012, of a young Australian woman experiencing complete failure of her ovaries and early onset menopause possibly due to a vaccination with Gardasil. There have been other cases of reduced and infrequent menstrual bleeding after vaccination with the drug. It seems there is need for research into more than immediate reactions to the medication, but into its long term effects.

What is the expenditure on promoting Gardasil in terms of:

- a) Production of vaccine
- b) Promotion of vaccine
- c) Subsidies for vaccinations
- d) Research into long term effects of Gardasil on adolescent girls?

Answer:

The National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program is a joint Australian, state and territory government initiative. State and territory implementation budgets are not known.

- a) Gardasil is produced by Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp and provided to the Australian Government under license by bioCSL (Australia) Pty Ltd (bioCSL). The Australian Government does not fund vaccine production.
- b) The Australian Government has allocated \$3.36 million for communication activities in the 2012-13 and 2013-14 financial years to promote uptake of the vaccine in males and females.
- c) The National HPV Vaccination Program is a school-based program provided under the National Immunisation Program (NIP). Vaccinations provided under the NIP are free for eligible cohorts. The current contract with bioCSL for supply of Gardasil for the National HPV Vaccination Program is for both the male and female programs for 2013 and 2014, at a total cost of \$97,678,540.96 (GST Inclusive).

- d) The Australian Government is not funding any specific safety studies. However there are several controlled clinical studies continuing internationally with long-term follow-up of safety as well as immunogenicity and efficacy outcomes. Data from a long-term follow-up study investigating the safety, immunogenicity, and effectiveness of Gardasil in young women demonstrate that Gardasil continues to be well tolerated up to seven years following vaccination. In this study there were no signals that would indicate any change in the safety profile of Gardasil.