

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000347

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: National Cancer Screening Register

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Watt, Murray

Question:

How is the Department communicating with women about the delay? How is the Department communicating with GPs about the delay?

Answer:

The communication activities will aim to deliver consistent and tailored key messages to woman and health care professionals about interim arrangements until 1 December 2017.

The focus of the communication activities will be to General Practitioners (GPs) who are a trusted and often primary source of health care information for women. The Department recognises the importance of providing them with accurate and up to date information about the delay.

In early April 2017 GPs will receive information about the arrangements put in place to support the current National Cervical Screening Program via the following activities:

1. a letter from the Department of Health's Chief Medical Officer informing them of the delay and what they need to know in relation to cervical screening during this interim period up to 1 December 2017.
2. a newsletter via peak medical colleges, Primary Health Networks and other similar professional networks.
3. regular updates to the cancerscreening.gov.au website including a suite of Frequently Asked Questions developed for GPs.

States and territories will continue to deliver the existing cervical screening programs within their jurisdictions, and will use their established networks to disseminate the newsletter and develop locally tailored messages for GPs and other health care professionals.

The key message to GPs during the interim period is to encourage all women to continue screening with a Pap test and not delay their cervical screening test.

The communications will also direct women to visit the consumer sections of www.cancerscreening.gov.au/cervical for more information.