

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 17 & 19 October 2012

Question: E12-024

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: TGA – USE OF VAGINAL MESH – TGA RESPONSE AND REPORTING TIMES

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Xenophon

Question:

The ABC's 7.30 program aired a story on health concerns relating to the use of vaginal mesh. The FDA raised significant concerns about the use of this product in 2008, and issued a warning about it in 2011. At the time, the TGA stated in media reports that it was 'urgently raising it with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists'.

- a) During the hearing, officers of the TGA indicated that the response had been published recently. Was it always the intent to publish the report at this date, or was the publication the result of the media coverage?
- b) The TGA has received much criticism about the time periods involved in dealing with information and informing the public - this was the subject of specific recommendations in both committee inquiries. Does the TGA acknowledge these problems and what is being done to address these issues?
- c) Are any measures currently in place? When the Australian reported on the increase in PIP ruptures, the article stated "The TGA did not respond to a request for comment yesterday". Is this consistent with the TGA's attitude to communication with the public?

Answer:

- a) The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) provided a statement to the 7.30 Report and published this and additional information on urogynaecological meshes on its website to provide context and background to the media coverage.
- b) Refer to answer provided to Question on Notice E12-027
- c) The TGA makes every effort to respond to journalists' requests in order to provide factual and up to date information for consumers. In this particular case the TGA was unable to meet the journalist's deadlines.