



Australian Government

Department of Health

STATEMENT

4 November 2016

Australian Schools Vaccination Register Update

The Federal Department of Health has discontinued a tender process for the creation of an Australian Schools Vaccination Register as a result of advice about the vaccines given in schools as part of the National Immunisation Program (NIP).

In a 2015-16 Budget measure *Improving Immunisation Coverage Rates* funding was earmarked to expand both of Australia's existing immunisation registers, the:

Australian Childhood Immunisation Register to become the 'whole of life' Australian Immunisation Register; and

the **National Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Register** (HPV Register) to become the Australian Schools Vaccination Register from 2017.

The Australian Immunisation Register commenced on 30 September 2016, collecting data on all National Immunisation Program (NIP) and many private vaccines for people of all ages.

A tender for the Australian Schools Vaccination Register was run to enable particular NIP vaccines given in schools to be included on the Australian Schools Vaccination Register from 2017.

However, since the commencement of the tender for the Australian Schools Vaccination Register, new advice has been received by the Department of Health which has caused the Department to reconsider the need for a specific and expanded Australian Schools Vaccination Register.

The advice included:

- A recent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommendation that pertussis vaccination for pregnant women be provided as part of the NIP. PBAC has asked the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) to provide advice on the clinical place and effectiveness of the pertussis vaccine schedule, including the pertussis booster currently given in the first year of high school.
- Acknowledgement that the adolescent varicella school based catch up program will cease by 2018, to align with the last cohort not to receive varicella as part of the early childhood schedule entering high school.

Noting that the adolescent varicella school based catch up program is coming to an end, if the adolescent pertussis booster is removed from the NIP schedule it is possible that the Schools Register will gather data on HPV vaccinations only, which is currently the case.

The Department of Health is now looking at alternatives to the Australian Schools Vaccination Register that may include options involving the whole of life Australian Immunisation Register.

In the meantime, the Department of Health is working with the Victorian Cytology Service about continuing the current HPV Register in 2017.

The Australian Government Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy, has advised that these administrative arrangements would have no impact on the health of adolescents because the full range of vaccination services are being delivered to the community and will continue to do so.

A further update will be provided in due course.

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