



# Primary Source Immunisation

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## From the Immunisation Principal Network Adviser

The value of immunisation has once again been illustrated in a tragic way with the death of a 22 year old with confirmed diphtheria in Queensland. This is the first case of diphtheria acquired in Australia since 1993 and the real tragedy as we know, is this could have been prevented.

We have recently had a few situations of vaccine preventable diseases in the country with measles, polio a few years ago and now this diphtheria.

It is a reminder that we do need to be vigilant and constantly work to overcome complacency in the community and counteract the anti vaccination media with appropriate comment.

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**Helen Moore Immunisation Principal Network Adviser**

## Diphtheria

The recent case of diphtheria in Queensland does provide a reminder to all members of the community that vaccine preventable diseases are commonplace in many countries and in particular those nearby. The rarity of diphtheria since the very successful National Immunisation Program [NIP] in Australia means that many are unaware of the disease, the possible consequences of infection and even that it is part of the NIP schedule.

The General Practice Queensland and Queensland Government [public health communiqué](#) is very informative.

## Flu vaccination information important

This year's seasonal flu vaccinations are in full swing with many people accessing funded vaccine and others purchasing for their personal protection. The National Influenza Vaccination Program commenced on 15 March this year and there is information relevant to the program and a variety of resources available from the Department of Health and Ageing's [Immunise Australia Program](#) website which also contains [provider information](#).

**National Forum**  
Australia's premier primary  
health care forum  
16-19 November 2011  
Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre

The banner for the National Forum features a blue background with a grid pattern. The text is white and blue, providing details about the event's location, dates, and nature as Australia's premier primary health care forum.

[AGPN National Forum 2011](#)

[Click here to view the events calendar.](#)

Those providers vaccinating children under five will already be aware that the CSL *Fluvax*® vaccine is not registered for this age group with the alternative vaccines being *Vaxigrip*® or *Influvac*®. Hence it is really important for the accuracy of our ACIR data that when these vaccinations are lodged with the register, the correct brand and batch number are noted. Medicare Australia has made sure that the flu vaccine brands in use are accessible on the register so we encourage all to click the correct one. There should be no *Fluvax*® data entered on ACIR for the under five group.

The Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer has asked all providers to “notify the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register when you administer influenza vaccine to a child aged up to 7 years. I also encourage you to report any adverse events following influenza vaccine to the Therapeutic Goods Administration through the usual reporting mechanisms in your State or Territory”. The full statement can be found on the website above.

## **Immunisation budget items**

This year’s Federal budget has allocated funds for ongoing immunisation programs along with extra amounts for new vaccines.

### **Prevenar 13® vaccine - catch up program**

\$40.7 million over four years to fund a catch up program for 12-35 month olds, providing access free of charge to the Prevenar 13® vaccine through the National Immunisation Program. Prevenar 13® protects against 13 strains of pneumococcal disease, and will replace an existing 7 valent pneumococcal vaccine, Prevenar®. Prevenar 13® will consequently be listed on the National Immunisation Program [NIP]

### **Listing of Menitorix®**

\$0.3 million for administrative costs associated with listing Menitorix® under the National Immunisation Program (NIP). This vaccine will replace the *Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine and *Neisseria meningitidis* (meningococcal C) vaccine, which are currently scheduled as individual doses for 12 month olds. This cuts down the number of needles for this age group.

### **Immunisation – continued funding**

\$4.1 million over four years to continue, on an ongoing basis, the Australian Government's program of national influenza surveillance systems established in response to pandemic (H1N1) 2009.

## **HPV Register is still there!**

Providers of HPV vaccine to women and girls of all ages are encouraged to continue to send their data to the HPV register. This register provides a wonderful resource for contacting those who are in need of subsequent doses of the vaccine, for follow up in the future and for ongoing research. Most providers are aware of how to send in their

data but for those who are unsure, all relevant information can be found at the [National HPV Vaccination Program Register](#) webpage or by phoning 1800 478 743 [or 1800 HPV REG]

## Vaccine Preventable Diseases report

The fifth national surveillance report on the epidemiology of vaccine preventable diseases has been published as a supplement of *Communicable Diseases Intelligence*, Vol 34, December 2010. The report, [Vaccine Preventable Diseases in Australia, 2005 to 2007](#) presents trends on 16 vaccine preventable diseases from three major sources of national data - notifications [2006 and 2007], hospitalisations [2005/2006 and 2006/2007] and deaths [2005 and 2006].

Diseases included in this report are poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus, rubella, Pertussis, influenza, rotavirus, Haemophilus influenzae, pneumococcal and invasive meningococcal disease, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, varicella and Zoster and Q fever.

The first of these reports covered the period 1993 to 1998 and have continued since then. They have also included descriptions and information on changes to the NIP schedule over the time.

A [printable version](#) is also available.

## Nominations open for the National Primary Health Care Awards

Australia's primary health service providers will now be able to achieve well earned recognition and rewards for outstanding performance through the inaugural [HESTA Primary Health Care Awards](#).

HESTA in conjunction with AGPN created these awards to mark excellence in primary health care.

**ME Bank has provided \$30,000 in prize money** for the awards which will culminate in an awards dinner at the AGPN's National Forum on Wednesday 16 November, to which finalists will be flown.

HESTA CEO Ms Anne-Marie Corboy said the awards were designed to recognise innovation and leadership.

"These are two fundamental elements of a skilled and responsive health workforce," Ms Corboy said.

AGPN CEO David Butt said the awards were timely in light of the incredible health reform agenda facing this sector.

"These awards recognise the role of all those who are usually the first the community turns to when they are sick or injured," Mr Butt said.



There are three categories for nominations:

**Young leader**

**Individual distinction**

**Team excellence**

**Nominations can be made online at <http://www.phcawards.com.au/>**

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