

INFLUENZA VACCINES

122. Mr BOARD to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Will the minister advise what the procedure is for the distribution of flu vaccines to pharmacists? Is this distribution on an equal basis?
- (2) Is there a capping to the pharmacist for its distribution?
- (3) If the pharmacist was to exceed this number of vaccines for seniors, will they be compensated for the additional number of vaccines they must purchase in order to service their community?
- (4) Has there been a shortage in the distribution of flu vaccines in Western Australia?
- (5) Has there been a delay in the availability of flu vaccine for distribution in Western Australia?

Mr KUCERA replied:

- (1) Flu vaccines are distributed to pharmacists by pharmaceutical wholesale companies or flu vaccine manufacturers. The Health Department of Western Australia (HDWA) does not distribute flu vaccines to pharmacists. The HDWA purchases flu vaccines directly from flu vaccine manufacturers and distributors and then distributes the flu vaccines directly to GPs.
- (2) Pharmaceutical; wholesale companies and/or flu vaccine manufacturers control the limit of flu vaccine supply. The HDWA is not aware of any capping.
- (3) Seniors (ie. people 65 years of age or older) can obtain a free flu vaccine directly from their GP.
- (4) During April there was a flu vaccine shortage for two weeks following a vaccine manufacturing failure in Melbourne which resulted in the loss of over 120 000 flu vaccines to the market. This resulted in temporary flu vaccine shortages in the public and private sectors.
- (5) Following the resumption of vaccine supplies to Western Australia in late April, there is sufficient flu vaccines available to the public and private sectors to maintain our excellent record in vaccination of seniors and those in the community at risk from influenza.