



March 3, 2017

## National Cervical Screening Program changes to be delayed

It has been announced by the Federal Department of Health, that changes to the National Cervical Screening Program which were due to be implemented from May 1st, will now be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

Last year it was announced that a new National Cancer Screening Register would be implemented which would capture data for cervical screening and bowel screening nationally.

The Federal Department of Health has been working closely with its program partners since May 2016, including Telstra Health, the contracted Service Provider, states and territories, healthcare providers, the Department of Human Services and others to deliver the national register to begin operating from March 2017.

The Federal Department of Health has said that based on the current schedule, the Register will not be ready in time for the publicised commencement dates which are currently 20 March 2017 for the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program and 1 May 2017 for the National Cervical Screening Program.

A statement received from Professor Brendan Murphy, Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer stated “Due to the complexity of assimilating and migrating data from eight state and territory cancer registers into one register, the start date for Australia’s first National Cancer Screening Register has been delayed.”

As a consequence of this, the new MBS items for the new Cervical Screening Test will not be made available until the introduction of the register.

In the meantime, the current guidelines for cervical screening will continue to exist.

The State and Territory Health Departments have confirmed that they will be able to support the existing Pap Test in their individual registers until the new test and national register are in place.

Joe Tooma, CEO, Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation stated “The Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation is encouraged by the fact that the government wants to get this new register right before it is launched nationally and we are very excited by the prospect of a more accurate and effective cervical screening program being implemented from December.”

“Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation encourages all women to attend for cervical screening as normal when they are next due a Pap test and if they have any concerns or questions then talk to their GP or Women’s Health Service”

**– ENDS –**

For further information or interview opportunities:

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