

PARLIAMENTARY MINUTE

Department of Health - Donation of H1N1 Vaccine to the World Health Organisation, and to travellers to the Southern Hemisphere

It is normal practice when a Government Department proposes to make a gift of a value exceeding £250,000, for the Department concerned to present to the House of Commons a Minute giving particulars of the gift, and explaining the circumstances; and to refrain from making the gift until fourteen Parliamentary sitting days after the issue of the Minute, except in cases of special urgency.

The Department of Health proposes to make two donations of H1N1 (Swine Flu) vaccine to the World Health Organisation and to travellers to the Southern Hemisphere. Together these gifts will be worth up to a maximum of £25 million. The vaccine price, agreed following a competitive procurement from a number of suppliers, remains commercial in confidence.

Donation of Swine Flu Vaccine to World Health Organisation

On behalf of all four countries of the UK, the Department of Health proposes to make a donation of 3.8 million doses of H1N1 (Swine Flu) vaccine to the World Health Organisation.

The donation will contribute to saving lives and reducing the spread of H1N1 in developing countries. It will also reduce the likelihood of further viral spread, including of a possible mutated virus over the next five years. Reducing the scope for mutation over this time period is important for global health, and will have an indirect effect on protecting the health of the UK population.

Donation of Swine Flu Vaccine to Travellers to the Southern Hemisphere

The Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that H1N1 (Swine Flu) vaccine could be offered as a travel vaccine for the individual benefit to those travelling to Southern Hemisphere countries during the Southern Hemisphere seasonal influenza season through the normal routes for travel vaccines, which would be primarily through General Practices.

In addition to the benefit received by the individual, this could significantly reduce the risk of swine flu being brought back into the UK and reduce the potential of swine flu, or a drifted strain, circulating in the UK over the summer.

The Department is making these two donations on a UK wide basis in consultation with the Devolved Administrations, who are similarly seeking their Parliamentary / Assembly agreement to donating their Barnett share of this total.

The Treasury has approved these proposals in principle. If, during the period of ten working days beginning on the date on which this Minute was laid before the House of Commons, a Member signifies an objection by giving notice of a Parliamentary Question or of a Motion relating to the Minute, or by otherwise raising the matter in the House, final approval of the gifts will be withheld pending an examination of the objection. Members are asked to give notice of any objections over a shorter time period than usual due to the urgent public health need of this donation.

Andy Burnham 23/3/10

RT Hon Andy Burnham

Secretary of State for Health