



SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

55 Swanston Street, Melbourne, 3000

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S.T.D. Area Code: 03

TELEGRAMS: "SOCIALWEL"

Ref. LSO:MR -----

12th January, 1978

Memorandum for: Acting Director of Youth Welfare.

Re: Depo Provera Contraceptive Injection, Winlaton.

The following information is intended to conclude events arising from publicity given by the "Truth" newspaper to the use of the above injection at Winlaton over the past five years. The publicity was given with dramatic headlines appearing in the issue of "Truth" during the week ending Friday, 11th November. The specific allegation made was that the injection was cancer causing and that it was being used in an experimental way on girls at Winlaton.

The Minister, Mr. Dixon, requested attendances at his office on Tuesday, 15th November with the Director-General to brief him concerning reactions from the media. A further attendance was made on 18th November when the Minister was interviewed by a reporter from the "Herald" newspaper. The following points were made:-

1. The drug has been used as a contraceptive in a number of overseas countries, including Britain, Sweden and New Zealand since 1970. We are in possession of some literature indicating its suitability for use as a contraceptive.
2. The drug is always administered with the consent of the girl and, where necessary, her parents and it is only used under medical supervision.
3. The Drug Evaluation Committee has indicated that the drug is not approved for marketing in Australia as a contraceptive. It is however available and has been approved for other purposes, notably as treatment for cancer of the cervix. The Institution has copies of correspondence from the Drug Evaluation Committee indicating that it can and is being used by medical practitioners as a contraceptive in particular circumstances.
4. The State Health Department has the drug listed under Schedule 4 indicating that it can be used by a registered medical practitioner for any purpose.
5. Its use at Winlaton was limited to particular circumstances with the consent of the parties involved and it was shown that forty-seven injections had been given during the previous twelve months and this represented a very small proportion of the girls moving through the Centre.

Noted.

*W. H. King
A. D. Y. W.
15/1/78*

DFAS

I asked for this report as a check as to whether any Ministerial commitment in this area in view of the adverse publicity. Spoked 15/16/78 ...2.

OCR: file: Winlaton Y.T.C - Health Services.