



Health (National Cervical Screening Programme) Amendment Act 2004

FACT SHEET 2

Purposes of the Health (National Cervical Screening Programme) Amendment Act

The Act was passed in March 2004 and will come into effect in March 2005.

Reason for the Act

The new Act is to reduce the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer through the effective operation of the National Cervical Screening Programme and by facilitating the process of evaluation of the Programme. The changes have been as a result of the key recommendations from the Ministerial Inquiry into the Under-reporting of Cervical Smear Abnormalities in the Gisborne region.

What it does

The new Act:

- enables the Programme to be fully evaluated to improve its safety and effectiveness for women
- improves the operation of the Programme, and changes the focus from the NCSP-Register to the Programme
- specifies the information that must be given to women to enable them to make an informed decision about participating in the Programme
- establishes ongoing independent review of the Programme
- enables mandating of standards by reference. This allows standards to be enforced if required.

Objectives of the National Cervical Screening Programme

The new Act states that the objectives of the NCSP are to:

- “promote high quality cervical screening, assessment and treatment services, while recognising and managing the differences between the various types of cervical cancer, with a view to reducing the incidence and mortality rate of cervical cancer; and
- inform women and the community of the risks, benefits and expected population health gains from participation in the NCSP; and
- promote the regular recall of women who are enrolled in the NCSP for screening tests; and
- facilitate continuous quality improvement by allowing and performing regular evaluations of the NCSP; and
- ensure that information that is collected for the purposes of the NCSP is:
 - (i) available in a reliable, accurate and timely manner, to persons authorised under this Part, or any other enactment, to have access to it; and
 - (ii) safely stored, including on the NCSP-Register; and
- provide information to women about the quality and effectiveness of the NCSP including, if it is appropriate, information based on the results of evaluations.”