

*Private Members' Business*

themselves, their babies, their families, their parents and society.

The provincial and territorial governments provide information and education about sexuality to teenagers through various means, including schools, health clinics, family physicians, public health nurses and social service centres. There are myriad other non-governmental organizations involved.

Nonetheless, the federal government must work with non-governmental organizations, other levels of government and individuals to identify barriers to service and to act to remove these barriers.

It is the government's belief that education and access to appropriate resources are critical steps in preventing these difficult problems of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

I would like to describe some current federal government initiatives that address the prevention of teenage pregnancy. Recently a report on adolescent reproductive health was produced by a federal-provincial-territorial working group and was distributed across Canada. The report examines the problems associated with sexual and reproductive health with an emphasis on teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. It also emphasizes the importance of sexual health information and education and makes recommendations. The government is committed to supporting the activities of the provinces, territories and organizations in meeting the recommendations outlined in this report. For example, through its special competition, the National Health Research and Development Program will fund research related to sexual health, education and services.

On a similar theme, many areas within the Department of National Health and Welfare are involved in the review of research related to contraceptive devices and contraceptive services.

The health protection branch has a bureau of radiation and medical devices that reviews the safety and efficacy data of new contraceptive devices and responds to reported problems with existing devices. The sale of

contraceptive devices in Canada is controlled by the Food and Drugs Act and the medical devices regulations.

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These regulations ensure that only safe and efficacious products are available to the Canadian public. A review of the research is done on all contraceptive devices which are left in the body for more than 30 days, such as the intrauterine device. These devices undergo a pre-market review considering safety and efficacy data prior to being sold in Canada.

Other contraceptive devices are monitored through post-market surveillance, through manufacturer statements of safety and efficacy.

As well, the bureau continues to contribute to the development of international standards for condom testing. This entails collecting data on condom standards, quality, distribution and use.

Under the Food and Drugs Act and regulations the bureau of human prescription drugs of the health protection branch monitors and evaluates all new drugs to be used as contraceptives. Their safety and efficacy is ensured during clinical trials and prior to marketing.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby during our first hour of debate called for the government to investigate the drug RU-486 which is used to terminate pregnancy. The government has no present intent to clinically investigate RU-486.

Before a drug like RU-486 may be sold in Canada, an acceptable new drug submission would have to be filed with the health protection branch. According to the food and drug regulations, such a submission must contain substantial evidence of the safety and efficacy of the product under the recommended conditions of use.

To date, no such submission and no clinical protocols for investigation of RU-486 have been received. It is important to note that under the Canadian Food and Drugs Act and regulations the decision to file a submission for any drug rests with the manufacturer.

The health protection branch also has a special advisory committee on reproductive physiology which advises it on issues related to contraception.