

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

PHARMAC, NOVARTIS REACH PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT ON GLIVEC

PHARMAC has reached a provisional agreement with Novartis to fund the cancer drug Glivec for a wide group of New Zealanders.

PHARMAC is asking for submissions on its funding proposal, which involves a number of products and is subject to the outcome of consultation and final approval by the PHARMAC Board.

Features of the proposal include:

- Funding for all patients with interferon-intolerant chronic phase chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML), and for CML patients in accelerated and blast crisis phases (about 90 people)
- when approved by Medsafe, funding for Glivec as first line therapy for all CML patients (about 85 further people)
- funding for all patients with unresectable and/or metastatic gastro-intestinal stromal tumours (GIST) (about 30 people)

“Negotiations on Glivec have been a high priority for PHARMAC and we have been working to reach an agreement as quickly as possible,” says PHARMAC Chief Executive Wayne McNee.

“This provisional agreement is the result of a lot of hard work by staff at both PHARMAC and Novartis.”

“Our negotiations with Novartis have enabled us to reach conditional agreement on a proposal to fund Glivec for all those patients for whom it is currently approved in New Zealand. In addition, PHARMAC is proposing to fund Glivec as a first line therapy for CML patients in chronic phase, if the drug is approved for this by Medsafe.”

“We are pleased to have reached this stage and we now want to hear the views of clinicians and the wider public before making a decision.”

PHARMAC will be considering all responses before taking a recommendation to the PHARMAC Board in October. The proposal includes 11 different products used in both community and hospital settings and involves both rebates and price reductions.

If approved by the PHARMAC Board, Glivec would be available fully funded from 1 December 2002.

PHARMAC is also proposing to implement a recommendation of the Cancer Treatments sub-committee of PTAC that treatment with Glivec can continue until the prescribing specialist decides to stop it.

Details of the proposal are available on the PHARMAC website, www.pharmac.govt.nz.

The deadline for consultation to be received by PHARMAC is Friday 18 October.

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