

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media Release

MORE MEDICINES TO BE FUNDED IN 2003-04

More people will have access to subsidised medicines through an agreement to raise the pharmaceutical budget to \$566 million in the 2003-04 financial year.

Minister of Health Annette King has approved the pharmaceutical budget agreed between PHARMAC and District Health Boards. The figure represents an increase of nearly 10 percent on 2002-03.

PHARMAC Chief Executive Wayne McNee is welcoming the agreement as good news for patients, the pharmaceutical industry and the health sector.

The agreed budget figure includes funding to address the growth in pharmaceutical volumes expected from more people gaining access to Primary Healthcare Organisations, and funds to cover the expected increase in medicines dispensed as a result of the partial return to all-at-once dispensing.

“The agreed expenditure target will enable PHARMAC to maintain New Zealanders’ access to subsidised medicines,” Wayne McNee says.

“The development of PHOs will see more people accessing primary care services, including pharmaceuticals. The provision of additional funding for medicines demonstrates a commitment to investing in pharmaceuticals as part of the comprehensive approach DHBs and PHARMAC are taking.”

The commitment to extra spending, and work towards agreeing a longer term funding path between PHARMAC and DHBs, should also allow pharmaceutical companies to plan better.

Wayne McNee says he is pleased at the way PHARMAC, DHBs and the Ministry of Health worked together on the budget setting process.

PHARMAC and DHBs have also agreed to ongoing three-monthly reviews of the pharmaceutical expenditure to more closely monitor progress against target figures. If necessary, expenditure targets will be modified up or down to reflect possible new investments or savings PHARMAC has made.

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