

10 December 2003

To: All Pharmaceutical Suppliers, Medical Groups and Interested Parties**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE SPECIAL AUTHORITY CRITERIA FOR ALENDRONATE FOR OSTEOPOROSIS**

PHARMAC is proposing to widen access to alendronate (Fosamax) 10mg and 70mg for the treatment of osteoporosis with effect from 1 March 2004 by amending the Special Authority criteria as follows (changes in bold and strikethrough):

Alendronate for Osteoporosis restriction

Special Authority - Retail pharmacy

a) Treatment of severe osteoporosis for patients meeting the following criteria:

1) history of one previous significant osteoporotic fracture demonstrated radiologically; and
2) documented bone mass density (BMD) ≥ 3.0 standard deviations below the mean normal value in young adults (i.e. T-Score ≤ -3.0).b) Application to be made by ~~endocrinologist, rheumatologist, geriatrician, general physician or gynaecologist~~ **relevant specialist or Vocationally Registered General Practitioner.**

c) Approvals are valid indefinitely.

d) Special Authority numbers for alendronate 10 mg and 70 mg can be interchangeable.

Note: In line with the Australian guidelines for funding alendronate, a vertebral fracture is defined as a 20% or greater reduction in height of the anterior or mid portion of a vertebral body relative to the posterior height of that body, or a 20% or greater reduction in any of these heights compared to the vertebral body above or below the affected vertebral body.

If you wish to make comments on this proposal, please forward them to Natalie Ganley at PHARMAC by **5:00pm, 16 January 2004.**

Yours sincerely

Wayne McNee
Chief Executive