

PHARMAC

Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

New type of diabetes drug funded

People with Type 2 diabetes are to have a new type of medicine to help manage their condition, following a decision by government drug-funding agency PHARMAC.

Pioglitazone (Actos) is to be fully funded for people with Type 2 diabetes, both as a therapy on its own or for use in combination with drugs known as sulphonylureas (such as glibenclamide).

PHARMAC Medical Director Dr Peter Moodie says obesity and Type 2 diabetes are significant and growing health issues for New Zealand, particularly affecting Maori and Pacific communities.

“The listing of pioglitazone will be a useful addition to currently available therapies for Type 2 diabetes,” Dr Peter Moodie says.

“Diabetes is a disease that can be very destructive to people and their families, so it is pleasing to be able to make this treatment available to New Zealanders.”

PHARMAC estimates that about 1000 people will initially be able to access fully subsidised pioglitazone in the first year, but that this figure will rise to about 3000.

Dr Peter Moodie says giving even more people access to pioglitazone will be one of PHARMAC’s priorities.

The treatment will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 September 2004, and is the ninth new medicine added to the Schedule this year. The growing list of new investments also includes:

- pegylated interferon in combination with ribavirin (for hepatitis C)
- venlafaxine (for severe depression)
- etanercept (for childhood arthritis)
- naltrexone (for alcohol addiction)
- lopinavir with ritonavir (for HIV/AIDS)
- ezetemibe (for raised cholesterol)

ENDS

More information: 021 863 342