

# PHARMAC

## Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Media release

### **Full funding for cardiac treatments**

People wanting to reduce their chances of suffering from heart attack or stroke are to have two more fully-funded treatments available.

Government drug-funder PHARMAC has announced that a new supply agreement will see amlodipine, a calcium channel blocker, gain full funding without Special Authority from 1 December 2005.

And in a separate decision, PHARMAC has agreed to fully fund low-dose aspirin as a treatment to help prevent heart attack and stroke from 1 March 2006.

“Felodipine is already fully funded and it is likely that most people will continue to be prescribed felodipine if their blood pressure is controlled using it,” Dr Moodie says. “It is pleasing to be able to provide open access to amlodipine as another fully funded treatment option.”

About 4000 patients already receive subsidised amlodipine and this is likely to grow once the Special Authority criteria are removed.

Dr Moodie says the decision to subsidise low-dose aspirin involves spending of more than \$17 million over five years. This reflects the large numbers of patients who will take it daily, he says.

“Aspirin is already widely used for pain relief, with over 350,000 prescriptions subsidised each year. The low dose version is a highly effective way of reducing the risk of heart attack or stroke,” Dr Moodie says.

As most patients taking low-dose aspirin will be in the over-65 age group, most of those enrolled in PHOs will pay a maximum \$3 for a 90-day prescription.

Dr Moodie says a large number of people already pay themselves for low-dose aspirin, and this decision means they will have their medicines subsidised from 1 March next year.

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