

Media release

PHARMAC, DHBs welcome increased budget for 2006-07

An \$18 million increase in pharmaceutical funding has been approved for the 2006-07 financial year.

Minister of Health Pete Hodgson has approved a \$600 million pharmaceutical budget for the 2006-07 financial year, following a joint recommendation from PHARMAC and District Health Boards. This continues the pattern of budget increases over recent years.

PHARMAC manages pharmaceutical spending on behalf of DHBs. The budget-setting process involves discussions between PHARMAC and DHBs, and a joint recommendation being taken to the Minister.

PHARMAC's Acting Chief Executive Matthew Brougham says the Government's commitment to increased pharmaceutical funding will help PHARMAC to improve New Zealanders' health through subsidised medicines.

"PHARMAC is focused on investing in medicines and some significant funding decisions have been made," says Matthew Brougham. "These include medicines such as temozolomide for brain tumours, adalimumab for rheumatoid arthritis and entacapone for Parkinsons disease."

"This commitment to additional funding for 2006-07 will mean that we will be able to manage the impact of those decisions and continue to add new medicines to the subsidised list."

Spokesman for the District Health Boards, Wairarapa DHB CEO David Meates, says new spending on pharmaceuticals benefits patients across all DHBs. PHARMAC's management of spending also assists DHBs in managing their overall budgets.

"We look forward to patients continuing to access new medicines, and to continued efficiencies being made on some older medicines," David Meates says.

[more]

PHARMAC will continue to invest in medicines that provide advancements over currently funded treatments, and those that provide good value for money, says Matthew Brougham. Areas of focus are likely to be treatments for cancer, HIV and diabetes. Already this financial year, PHARMAC has added a new long-acting insulin for diabetes, insulin glargine (Lantus), and widened access to treatments for prostate cancer (goserelin) and asthma (long acting beta agonists such as Oxis and Serevent).

Matthew Brougham and David Meates say PHARMAC and DHBs will continue to work together to ensure long-term decisions on pharmaceutical funding can continue to be made.

[ends]

For more information contact:

Simon England, PHARMAC on 021 863 342, or David Meates, Wairarapa DHB on 0274924505