

6 December 2006

To all Pharmaceutical Suppliers, Hospital Pharmacists, Medical Groups and Interested Parties

**Consultation on a proposal relating to diltiazem hydrochloride**

We have been made aware of concerns regarding the available diltiazem preparations in New Zealand. Therefore we seek your feedback regarding the appropriateness of the current diltiazem preparations listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule. In particular we would like your opinion as to whether the current listings should be altered to reduce the possibility of prescribing and dosing errors occurring.

The DHBNZ Safety and Quality of Medicines Group has expressed concerns regarding the diltiazem preparations currently listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule. These concerns relate to the different release characteristics of these preparations and the possibility for errors to occur in either the primary or secondary care settings.

In particular, the concerns revolve around potential for:

- the administration of an immediate release preparation when a controlled release preparation was intended by the prescriber; and,
- confusion between the once daily and twice daily formulations, and the prescribing/dispensing errors that this could lead to.

We would therefore appreciate your feedback regarding the following questions:

- Are you aware of any prescribing errors or confusion in the prescribing of diltiazem? If so, what preparations does this occur with?
- Do you consider that reducing the number of diltiazem preparations listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule would reduce these errors/confusion, and do you consider that this would be appropriate?
- If reducing the number of diltiazem preparations is appropriate what preparations do you consider should remain listed and which should be delisted from the Pharmaceutical Schedule?

If you have any other comments regarding what diltiazem preparations should be listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule we would also appreciate them.

Early next year we are intending to seek a recommendation from the Pharmaceutical Therapeutic Advisory Committee, or the relevant Subcommittee, regarding which diltiazem preparations should be listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

If you would like your response to be considered by this Committee could you please forward to me your comments before **8 January 2006**. If you have any questions regarding this issue please do not hesitate to contact me on (04) 916 7555.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Woodruffe  
Therapeutic Group Manager