

Minutes of the PHARMAC Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting

Thursday 1 March 2007

The meeting was held in the Tait Room, 14th floor, Cigna House, 40 Mercer St, Wellington from 9.30am.

Present:

Sandra Coney	Chair
Vicki Burnett	CAC member
Matiu Dickson	CAC member
Dennis Paget	CAC member
Sharron Cole	CAC member
Paul Stanley	CAC member

Apologies

Heather Thomson	CAC member
Kuresa Tiumalu-Faleseuga	CAC member
Te Aniwa Tutara	CAC member

In attendance

Simon England	PHARMAC (minutes)
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Matthew Brougham, Peter Alsop, Jackie Evans, Karen Jacobs, Marama Parore, Dilky Rasiah, Stephen Woodruffe (PHARMAC Staff) attended for relevant items.

1. Record of previous CAC meeting

The committee asked that the minutes of the November 2006 meeting be amended to include the provisional dates for 2007, agreed at the November 2006 meeting.

The committee agreed that, with those amendments, the November 2006 minutes of the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Coney/Dickson carried

2. Conflicts of Interest

No new conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Chair's report

The chair tabled a written report at the meeting.

As requested by the committee, the summary of submissions on the consultation paper Health Industry Sponsorship of Consumer Health Organisations, was distributed. Some comments had been received back, and there had been requests for further copies of the document. These had been actioned.

The chair had received a copy of the Ministry of Health's summary of consultation on direct to consumer advertising of prescription medicines. The CAC (and PHARMAC) had made a submission during the consultation.

The chair had been approached by the media (Christchurch Press) to comment on an Australian decision in relation to advertisements for Xenical.

A further meeting of the steering group for forming a peak body for health and disability consumers had been held. The CAC chair had attended in her role as a member of the steering group. A further summit was provisionally planned for October 2007. CAC members expressed an interest in attending, noting they had attended the initial summit in November 2005. The CAC Secretary was asked to investigate if PHARMAC would support CAC's attendance at a 2007 summit.

The report was received by the committee

Dickson/Paget

Feedback from the Board to CAC:

The committee noted feedback from the PHARMAC Board on recommendations from its November 2006 meeting. The committee asked for advice on the Board's policy in relation to the number of terms members could service, and for clarification of duration of terms.

4. Correspondence

The committee sought a continuation of summaries of correspondence received by PHARMAC.

5. Funding and procurement update

Two new funding decisions had been made by the PHARMAC Board in February 2007. These were a widening of access to the Type 2 diabetes medicine pioglitazone, and the listing of two new medicines to treat HIV/AIDS.

The committee was updated on issues around the breast cancer drug Herceptin. The committee considered that, should PHARMAC proceed with funding for a 9-week concurrent course of Herceptin, women with breast cancer would need to have confidence in the medicine as funded. The committee considered there was a critical need for good information and that PHARMAC should investigate developing – with an appropriate consumer group – a patient-oriented resource.

6. Checklist for Consumer Groups considering sponsorship from Health Industry

The draft checklist considered at the November 2006 meeting had been updated, and continued to be based on Australian guidelines. The committee noted that some NZ groups had made their policies available through the consultation process, and asked for these to be provided for further discussion.

The committee also agreed to inform the peak Australian consumer organisation of the work it was undertaking.

Further amendments were discussed and the committee agreed a forward process for developing the checklist. The committee agreed to circulate and comment on a draft via email by the end of April 2007. This could then be finalised at the next meeting of the CAC and if agreed, provided widely, beginning with those groups who submitted to the initial discussion paper.

7. Medicines Strategy

The committee considered how it might respond to the Ministry of Health's consultation on a Medicines Strategy. The Committee agreed to make its own submission, in addition to reviewing a PHARMAC submission if time permitted.

The committee agreed to circulate and finalise a draft submission ahead of the deadline for submissions (30 March).

8. Demand Side Update

Expanding projects and increased workloads meant the Demand Side team was expanding. A further initiative underway is planning for a 2nd We Can Make a Difference conference. A member of CAC could ideally be on the planning committee, and there was also a desire to have a consumer speaker at the conference.

Updates were provided in relation to the BPAC best practice magazine, Green Prescriptions, Polypharmacy and the Pacific Responsiveness Strategy.

A PHARMAC magazine was being considered around Demand Side priority areas. The committee considered that a small and “meaty” magazine issued more frequently could have more punch than a heavier, glossy lifestyle-type magazine. A further option that could be investigated was negotiating space in existing publications.

The committee was briefed on the upcoming Gut Reaction campaign. This campaign highlights the over-prescribing of proton pump inhibitors for heartburn and other gastric disorders. A training programme was being initiated for pharmacists, who were being asked to review patients to determine if PPI use was appropriate for them long-term.

The committee expressed concern about the Gut Reaction training resource, regarding explanatory information, consent and privacy of information for consumers taking part in the training programme. The committee was disappointed it was not consulted about this resource earlier (before it was printed and distributed). It recommended that pharmacists be advised not to collect signatures on the Record of Patient Interviews and that an information sheet be prepared for participating consumers, explaining the project.

The committee expects to be involved at the conceptual and developmental stages of projects that directly involve consumers.

Coney/Paget

Members noted that consultation with the committee had occurred in the past, and that members had made contributions to projects such as Wise Use of Antibiotics.

The Committee requested a copy of the Gut Reaction campaign project plan.

9. Medicine supply/out of stock

The committee was briefed on recent medicine supply issues and PHARMAC’s general approach to managing medicines supply.

The meeting ended at 3.05pm