

10 September 2008

To all interested parties

Request for information: topical anti-acne treatments

PHARMAC is currently investigating the feasibility of listing and subsidising without restriction a topical anti-acne treatment (or treatments) on the Pharmaceutical Schedule as a first line therapy for acne vulgaris.

Background

Up until 1997 PHARMAC subsidised the following anti-acne products on the Pharmaceutical Schedule without any restrictions:

- Benzoyl peroxide (gel 2.5%; gel 5%; gel 10%; lotion 5%; lotion 10%);
- Clindamycin phosphate (lotion 1%; solution 1%);
- Erythromycin (solution 2%); and
- Tretinoin (cream 0.05%; gel 0.05%; liquid 0.05%; lotion 0.05%)

In 1997 a review of topical anti-acne treatments was undertaken. Following this, all of the chemicals were removed from the Pharmaceutical Schedule, which resulted in no funded topical anti-acne treatments. There have been no changes to the funding status since 1997.

The Pharmacology Advisory and Therapeutics Committee (PTAC) have considered anti-acne treatments on two separate occasions in the last 12 months. PTAC recommended that a topical anti-acne treatment be listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule and gave this recommendation a medium/high priority. PTAC also considered that a competitive process could be run for one topical anti-acne treatment.

Request for Information

If topical anti-acne treatments were listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule, it would mean that the treatment(s) would be publicly funded for patients if dispensed pursuant to a prescription.

PHARMAC seeks information from all stakeholders (including patient and health professional groups, individual patients and health professionals, and suppliers) regarding the following:

- The clinical need for a funded topical anti-acne treatment (or treatments);

- Any preferences for topical anti-acne treatments and your reasons for the preferences in particular:
 - chemicals;
 - strengths;
 - presentation types (e.g. cream, lotion, gel, solution);
 - brands;
 - suppliers;
- Any particular health benefits of one class or group of chemicals over the others (e.g. retinoids, benzoyl peroxides, antibiotics);
- The appropriateness of funding just one topical anti-acne treatment or one topical anti-acne class/group of chemicals through a competitive sole supply process;
- Estimated number of patients who would benefit from funded access to topical anti-acne treatments (and nature of the benefit);
- Proposed restrictions to apply to dispensing of funded topical anti-acne treatments (if any); and
- Any additional information considered relevant to a proposal to list topical anti-acne treatments on the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

PHARMAC is also requesting specific information from pharmaceutical suppliers of topical anti-acne treatments. Pharmaceutical suppliers should refer to www.pharmac.govt.nz for this information request.

Following consideration of all responses PHARMAC will make a decision on how best to proceed. This may include a competitive process for the supply of a topical anti-acne treatment (or treatments), possibly by including topical anti-acne treatments in the 2008/09 annual multi-product tender later this year.

Please forward all responses to Mike Bignall at PHARMAC at PO Box 10-254, Wellington 6143, or email to mike.bignall@pharmac.govt.nz by Wednesday 8 October 2008.

We look forward to receiving your responses.

Yours sincerely



Mike Bignall
Therapeutic Group Manager