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Media release

PHARMAC begins consultation on alternative thyroid treatment

PHARMAC has begun consultation on a proposal to subsidise a further brand of the thyroid treatment levothyroxine.

Consultation is a further step towards introducing an alternative to the Eltroxin brand that is currently funded.

PHARMAC Medical director Dr Peter Moodie says the proposal affects pharmaceutical companies, doctors, pharmacists and patients so it is important there is an opportunity for people to give their views of the proposal.

Levothyroxine (also known as thyroxine) is widely used in New Zealand with approximately 70,000 patients prescribed it.

The proposal involves the listing of the Goldshield brand of levothyroxine, which would be supplied in New Zealand by Boucher & Muir, its Australasian distributors.

“As well as depending on consultation responses, the proposal is also provisional until such time as Medsafe approves the medicine for use in New Zealand,” says Dr Moodie.

The Goldshield brand is widely used in the United Kingdom, from where stocks will originate.

Dr Moodie says that usually there would be a 4 to 5 month lead-in time for a new pharmaceutical to be available, because of manufacturing, shipping and other issues. However, PHARMAC has made a particular effort to ensure an advance shipment of Goldshield is available sooner, from early November.

“Once we have more information, we will keep people informed about timelines,” he says.

Two dosage strengths of Goldshield would be listed under the proposal – 50 and 100 micrograms.

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