

Thursday 15 May

## REVIEW OF PTAC's GUIDELINES

PHARMAC is reviewing PTAC's Guidelines and I would like to invite you to consider the proposed amendments that PHARMAC is putting forward. I welcome your views on those proposals and any further changes to the Guidelines that you consider would be desirable.

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) is a statutory committee established under the New Zealand Public Health & Disability Act 2000 (NZPHD Act). It is currently made up of vocationally registered medical practitioners with expertise in clinical pharmacology, internal medicine and general practice. As a PHARMAC advisory committee, PTAC's role is to provide objective advice to PHARMAC on pharmaceuticals and their benefits (s50 NZPHD Act).

*Medicines New Zealand* (the Government's medicines strategy) and its accompanying action plan, *Actioning Medicines New Zealand*, were released in December 2007. The strategy consultation process identified concerns held by some stakeholders regarding the ability of PTAC to provide PHARMAC with free and frank, objective advice in relation to medicines funding applications. Responding to submitters' concerns, *Medicines New Zealand* committed to:

- the Ministry of Health and PHARMAC reviewing the PTAC appointment protocol (describing the process for appointment of members) to ensure it supports the independent appointment process required by the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 ("the Act"); and
- PHARMAC consulting broadly on changes to PTAC's Operational Guidelines to ensure optimal arrangements are in place for PTAC to provide free and frank advice to the PHARMAC Board.

The Ministry of Health and PHARMAC have recently been consulting on the appointment protocol. This work is being led by the Ministry of Health and a revised Appointment Protocol is targeted for completion by the end of July.

PHARMAC, together with the Ministry of Health, is now beginning the second of the projects specified by *Actioning Medicines New Zealand*, the broad consultation on PTAC's Guidelines.

The 'Guidelines for the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) and its Sub-Committees' detail the terms of reference for these PHARMAC committees. The Guidelines cover the establishment of the committees, the relationship between the committees and PHARMAC, membership, remuneration, the responsibilities of the committee Chairs and all members, the management of meetings and the process for reviewing medicines funding applications. The Guidelines were last reviewed in 2002.

Attached to this letter is background information about PTAC, a summary of the major changes proposed and a revised set of Guidelines which we propose to rename the “*Terms of Reference for the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) and PTAC Subcommittees*”.

We encourage you to distribute these consultation documents to any other stakeholders who you consider may be interested.

We would welcome your comments on the draft revised Guidelines (entitled *Terms of Reference*). Please forward your written submissions to Erin Murphy, PTAC Secretary (erin.murphy@pharmac.govt.nz or (04) 916 7512) by **Friday 13 June**.

If you wish to meet to discuss your submission or share your views in person, please contact Erin Murphy by **Friday 30 May**. If there is significant interest in face-to-face meetings, we may organise larger meetings with groups of stakeholders.

We look forward to hearing your views and will continue to keep you abreast of this process as it evolves.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Brougham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Matthew Brougham**  
Chief Executive