

Getting involved in PHARMAC decision-making



Consultation

Most New Zealanders are affected by PHARMAC's decisions, so it's important that we understand your views when we are making choices.

We consult with the public, when appropriate, about our activities and the decisions we make. We exercise this discretion carefully to decide when we seek public comment; both in relation to individual funding decisions and other activities. More often than not we consult before making our decisions.

Effective consultation means decision makers have all the necessary information, and have taken into account all the likely impacts of their decision, to enable them to make a robust and well-informed decision. To ensure PHARMAC has all the information it needs, we encourage you to set out your views, with supporting reasons, in a consultation response.

Who do we consult with?

We seek the views of all people who may have an interest in the proposal or who may be affected by it, to get feedback on our proposed approach.

We welcome all the views we receive, whether from health professionals, the pharmaceutical industry, consumer and patient groups, Government agencies or the general public.

What do we consult on?

Activities we consult on can include:

- whether to fund a new medicine
- whether to widen or restrict access to a medicine
- policy changes, such as to our Operating Policies and Procedures.

How do we consult?

We send a consultation document to interested parties and invite comments. We also publish consultation documents on our website.

We consult for a minimum of two weeks, though this can be longer depending on the circumstances.

All the submissions we receive are provided to the PHARMAC Board, which makes the decisions, so we need to receive written responses (by post, fax or email). We can also meet with interested groups to discuss their views.

All the responses we receive are taken into account before decisions are made.

How can you get involved?

We maintain a contact list of people who are interested in our decisions, and anyone can join it.

To be added to this list, call, fax, write or email us (general@pharmac.govt.nz) with your name and full contact details (including your role, organisation, postal address, fax number and email address) and your area of interest. Consultation lists are grouped by therapeutic area, for example, Mental Health, Diabetes, Respiratory Medicines. You will be sent a copy of the consultation letters that relate to the therapeutic areas you have selected. Consultation letters are also published on our website.

You can also register via our website (www.pharmac.govt.nz) to receive news feeds in the area(s) of interest to you, including consultations. Our website includes information about what we do and the latest developments, such as proposals we are seeking feedback on and committee meeting minutes.

How can you provide feedback?

All our consultation letters give instructions on how to provide feedback and the deadline for responses. They also provide contact details for the person at PHARMAC who is responsible for the process, so that you can contact them to discuss any questions you have.

PHARMAC is the Government agency that decides, on behalf of District Health Boards (DHBs), which medicines get subsidised so that they are more affordable for New Zealanders and available nationally. The subsidies PHARMAC sets are funded from a fixed budget that is part of DHB funding. PHARMAC also promotes the optimal use of medicines, carries out some procurement for DHBs, and manages special access programmes for some medicines.

Information Sheets on various PHARMAC topics are available from our website: www.pharmac.govt.nz/patients/infosheets

If you have specific areas of interest (such as consultations, committees or vacancies), visit our website and subscribe to news feeds in the area(s) of interest to you: <http://pharmac.govt.nz/feeds>

Contacting Us

Call us on **0800 66 00 50** (between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday), or on **04 460 4990** (between 8am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday).

Write to us at: **PHARMAC, PO Box 10 254, Wellington**
– we respond to all letters

Email us at enquiries@pharmac.govt.nz – we respond to all emails