

12 October 2009

Media release

PHARMAC looking to improve consumer participation

Government medicine funder PHARMAC is asking for feedback on options for improving its consumer participation.

PHARMAC has issued a discussion document that puts forward seven options for improving consumer participation. These build on, and in some cases add to, the ways that consumers can currently participate in PHARMAC's work.

Acting Chief Executive Steffan Crausaz says the work has emerged as part of PHARMAC's continuing efforts to improve how it engages with consumers.

"We already have a range of mechanisms and activities in place for people to participate in our work," says Steffan Crausaz. "These range from taking part in our campaigns that encourage people to make the best use of funded medicine, to giving us feedback in consultation, or through the advice of our Consumer Advisory Committee."

Steffan Crausaz says some of the options involve providing more information to consumers, while others would involve significant changes to how PHARMAC operates.

The seven options are:

- A patient reference guide
- Quarterly consumer specific newsletter
- Occasional papers
- Formalising regular consumer meetings
- Consumer comment on PTAC recommendations
- Retrospective consumer audit
- Consumer involvement in prioritisation process

The options provided are not exhaustive. Though PHARMAC is seeking feedback on the seven options provided in the paper, Steffan Crausaz says PHARMAC is open to considering other options too. Released last Friday, PHARMAC used its Forum on the same day to seek initial feedback on the ideas outlined in the discussion document.

"Overall we want to understand consumer perspectives and for our work to be better understood. The paper we have issued seeks feedback on options we think could improve our engagement, and seeks further ideas."

Consultation on the discussion document closes on 4 December.

The document can be accessed at:

<http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/patients/haveyoursay/ConsumerParticipation>.

ENDS

More information: 021 863 342.