

11 July 2008

Aripiprazole (Abilify) funding approved

PHARMAC is pleased to announce the approval of funding for a new antipsychotic treatment, aripiprazole (Abilify), from 1 August 2008.

Aripiprazole will be fully subsidised for patients who have previously tried risperidone or quetiapine but had to stop therapy with these medicines because of unacceptable side effects or inadequate response. Clinicians will need to make Special Authority applications for subsidy.

Details of the decision

Aripiprazole, which is supplied by Bristol-Myers Squibb, will be listed in the General Antipsychotics section of Section B, and in Part II of Section H, of the Pharmaceutical Schedule from 1 August 2008 at the following prices and subsidies (ex-manufacturer, excluding GST):

Pharmaceutical	Brand name	Form and strength	Pack size	Price and subsidy
Aripiprazole	Abilify	10 mg tablet	30	\$123.54
Aripiprazole	Abilify	15 mg tablet	30	\$175.28
Aripiprazole	Abilify	20 mg tablet	30	\$213.42
Aripiprazole	Abilify	30 mg tablet	30	\$260.07

The funding of aripiprazole will be subject to the following Special Authority:

Initial application from any relevant practitioner. Approvals valid for 2 years for applications meeting the following criteria:

Both:

- 1 Patient is suffering from schizophrenia or related psychoses; and
- 2 Either:
 - 2.1 An effective dose of risperidone or quetiapine has been trialled and has been discontinued, or is in the process of being discontinued, because of unacceptable side effects; or
 - 2.2 An effective dose of risperidone or quetiapine has been trialled and has been discontinued, or is in the process of being discontinued, because of inadequate clinical response.

Renewal from any relevant practitioner. Approvals valid for 2 years where the treatment remains appropriate and the patient is benefiting from treatment.

Abilify will have protection from delisting and subsidy reduction until 1 August 2011.

Changes made as a result of feedback

On 27 May 2008 we sent out a consultation letter seeking feedback on our proposal to fund aripiprazole. In this letter we proposed that aripiprazole would be subject to a requirement for the following prescription endorsement for subsidy:

“Aripiprazole is subsidised for patients suffering from schizophrenia or related psychoses after a trial of an effective dose of risperidone or quetiapine that has been discontinued, or is in the process of being discontinued, because of unacceptable side effects or inadequate response, and the prescription is endorsed accordingly.”

We appreciate all the feedback we received and acknowledge the time people took to respond. All consultation responses were considered in their entirety in making a decision on the proposed changes.

While most of the feedback received was supportive of aripiprazole funding, some consultation responses highlighted the possibility that aripiprazole might be used for indications other than those included in the proposal and that this might have a significant financial impact.

As a result, to enable closer management of the intended criteria, the decision was made to apply the proposed clinical criteria via Special Authority rather than prescription endorsement. This alteration changes the administrative process for seeking funding but should have no significant impact on prescribers or patients versus the original proposal.

If you have any queries about this funding decision you can call our toll free number (9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday) on 0800 66 00 50.