

10 January 2011

REVIEW OF PHARMAC'S EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

Greetings and happy New Year.

You will recall that we sought your views on our discussion document, *PHARMAC's Review of Exceptional Circumstances: Seeking Your Views*, in August 2010. We received more than 70 submissions in response to that document and have given serious consideration to your feedback and how we can continue to improve our Exceptional Circumstances (EC) scheme.

We now present our consultation document on our proposed changes to EC – *PHARMAC's Review of Exceptional Circumstances: Consultation on Proposed Changes*. I invite your response to our proposal as we continue to determine how best to provide for exceptional circumstances and contribute to better, sooner and more convenient healthcare.

In summary, we propose a single exceptional circumstances scheme called Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA). NPPA would consider funding for individuals for treatments prior to their assessment for Schedule listing for the relevant indication.

Within NPPA there would be three distinct pathways by which individual patients can apply for funding for pharmaceuticals not listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule:

- **Unique Clinical Circumstances (UCC)** – would provide funding consideration for patients whose clinical circumstances are so unusual that we expect them to be the only patient in that situation and we would not have considered them when making a Schedule funding decision.
- **Urgent Assessment** – would give wider access to medicines for patients in a serious clinical circumstance who would either experience a significant deterioration in health or would lose the opportunity for a significant improvement in quality of life before a Schedule assessment is completed. Patients qualifying under this pathway may be part of a group of patients with a similar condition.
- **Hospital Pharmaceuticals in the Community (HPC)** – would provide funding consideration where it would be more affordable for the District Health Board to fund the medicine in the community for a patient under its care than to pay for another form of treatment.

While we are seeking your views on the feasibility of the individual aspects of NPPA, the proposals are presented as a complete package and, therefore, the impact of any changes to individual aspects of the proposals would need to be considered across the proposals as a whole.

We will consider your feedback as we determine what, if any, changes to make to our EC policy. Final proposals for changes are planned to be presented to the PHARMAC Board for a decision in June 2011.

PHARMAC's Review of Exceptional Circumstances: Consultation on Proposed Changes, the initial discussion document of August 2010, a summary of the submissions we received in response to the discussion document and other information on this review are available on our website at www.pharmac.govt.nz/ecreview. You can download an electronic copy from that site, or request an electronic or hard copy by emailing ecreview@pharmac.govt.nz or calling us on 0800 660 050.

Written responses should be provided by **5 pm on Friday, 25 March 2011**. Please submit comments via email, fax or post to:

Bryce Wigodsky
PHARMAC
PO Box 10-254
Wellington 6143

Email: ecreview@pharmac.govt.nz
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If you would like to meet with us to discuss your views, whether as an alternative or in addition to a written response, we would be pleased to do so. Please contact Bryce Wigodsky on (04) 460 4990 or by email at ecreview@pharmac.govt.nz by 5 pm on Friday, 18 February 2011, to arrange a meeting.

I hope you take the opportunity to share your knowledge and views on this important work.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Brougham
Chief Executive