

Minutes of the Pharmac Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting Wednesday 7 May 2025

The meeting was held Level 9, 40 Mercer St, Wellington.

Present

Robyn Manuel (Chair)
Hazel Heal
Georgina Johnson
Vivien Verheijen
Leo Junior Apaipo
Pui-Yi Cheng

Apologies

Jesse Davis
Dee Young (Project Manager, Medical Devices)

Pharmac staff in attendance

Nicola Ngawati (Director, Equity and Engagement)
Salī Salī (Manager, Equity and Engagement)
Mako Osborne (Implementation Advisor)

For relevant items

Brendan Boyle (Acting Chief Executive)
Trevor Simpson (Kaituruki Māori)
Michael Johnson (Director Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Hannah Burgess (Principal Policy Advisor)
Susan Melvin (Policy Advisor)
Jason Arnold (Principal Analyst)
Robyn Harris (Team Leader, Implementation)
Felicity Williams (Implementation Advisor)
Megan Nagel (Engagement Lead, Medical Devices)
Matthew McKenzie (Therapeutics Group Manager)
Oliver Whitehead (Team Leader, Government Services)
Cushla Managh (Team Leader, Communications)

Karakia and whakawhanaungatanga

The meeting was opened with karakia.

1. Action items / notes from previous meeting / interest register

Interest register

Noted. One member updated their interests.

Notes from previous meeting

Notes for the April meeting was approved as a true record of discussion, with amendments.

Action items

The action items were reviewed.

Membership terms

Noted.

Professional Development report back

No update.

2. CAC Chair update

The Chair encouraged the committee to become members of the Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi) and its patient and citizens interest group.

The Chair noted there were two board meetings in April and sought clarification on who decides attendance as she was not invited to the out of cycle meeting. Director Equity and Engagement noted that out of cycle meetings occur when there are only one or two items to discuss that need to be expedited.

The Chair conveyed:

- Members disappointment that the change proposal to disestablish the Māori directorate did not go to CAC before it was announced publicly. Members recommended that CAC is informed early when there are significant organisational changes.
- That she felt there was a gap between CAC and the Pharmac board and noted that consumers should be involved at every point in Pharmac's processes.
- Members feel undervalued and noted negative perceptions consumer advocates have about CAC. Members would like clarity on the role of CAC and the recommendation from the organisational capability report to create a consumer reference group.

3. Policy update

The Principal Policy Advisor and Policy Advisor outlined the Policy team's role and discussed three key workstreams: the Operating Policies and Procedures Manual the review of the Exceptional Circumstances Framework, and the Rare Disorders policy.

They discussed how they could stay engaged and connected with CAC during Policy consultations.

Members recommended that the consultation and engagement phase include diverse voices and be accessible and noted that the policy team can approach CAC for advice on these workstreams.

Members suggested the Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA) framework be more transparent and noted it would be helpful for patients to see what a successful NPPA application looks like.

One member also noted that people should be advised of their option to use and/or consult with buyers' clubs to source medicines.

Actions:

(1) Policy team to update CAC on the progress of this work at a future meeting.

4. Uptake analysis from medicines budget uplift

Principal Analyst provided a summary of data showing the uptake of medicines from the medicines budget uplift.

Members were interested in seeing data on comorbidities and noted the importance of monitoring this data to ensure people with the highest health need are accessing funded medicines.

Members noted they would like to see updates of this work regularly and recommended that Pharmac provide the Analysis team with the required resource to conduct this work.

Actions:

(2) Principal Analyst to provide an update paper on the uptake analysis from the medicines budget uplift.

(3) Send PowerPoint Presentation to members.

5. Implementation update

Implementation Advisor provided an overview of her role as the enquiries lead and Team Leader, Implementation sought feedback on how to amend processes to be more consumer centric.

Members suggested increasing accessibility for consumers. This included providing an option to leave messages in different formats (e.g. video), having a direct line for consumers, ensuring there are timeframes on both voicemail and email and allowing people to enquire in Te Reo Māori. Members also noted it would be beneficial to see the demographics of enquirers and implement qualitative measures.

Team Leader, Implementation noted that the team want to make it easier for people to access/contact Pharmac and are looking into different ways this can be done.

Members mentioned the substantial resource required for this role and asked whether there was professional supervision in place.

Team leader, Implementation noted that professional supervision has been requested and Pharmac has approved a six-month enquiries surge position.

6. Update on comprehensive list consultation for medical devices

Engagement Lead – medical devices provided background on the consultation for a comprehensive list for hospital medical devices currently used by Health New Zealand hospitals.

There was discussion on inequity, specifically around clinician's having the choice of which device a patient gets and ensuring the process to get new devices added to the list is accessible.

7. Pharmac reset update

Director Strategy, Policy and Performance gave an update on the work Pharmac is planning to undertake in response to the recent organisational capability review and consumer workshops reports. This included engaging with stakeholders and consumers to develop a 12-month reset plan to demonstrate immediate changes and progress, and establishing a small team dedicated to driving this work.

Members emphasised that they want to see consumers involved in the medicine journey from the beginning to the end and have patient stories included in papers considered by PTAC.

Members highlighted that they provide good advice to Pharmac but often feel it is sidelined, noting the consumer workshops where that advice was turned into a report.

Members cautioned that there is a lot of fatigue from CAC and the wider sector that may make it difficult to get buy in and noted the importance of being receptive to different perspectives.

Actions:

(4) Provide regular updates on the progress of the Pharmac reset work to CAC.

8. Acting CE update

Acting Chief Executive (CE) provided an update on key work occurring across Pharmac including the organisational review, Māori directorate proposal, new Letter of Expectations, societal investment work and the recruitment process for a new CE.

Members noted they would appreciate being notified early of significant organisational decisions like the proposal to disestablish the Māori directorate and wanted to know whether there would be performance measures in place to ensure this is the better approach.

Members highlighted meaningful engagement and discussed the importance of consumer and patient input being part of the medicine journey, and whether Pharmac could look at integrating models used overseas.

Members also discussed the budget and whether there was anything set aside for consumer engagement. Acting CE noted that we are wanting to allocate resource to consumer engagement.

Members discussed the extent to which consumers could be involved in Pharmac's processes, including whether there would be a reference group for the Pharmac reset work, the importance of a consumer lens being part of prioritisation, and whether there was an opportunity for a CAC member to be on employee interview panels.

Acting CE noted the approach to the Pharmac reset is to engage with consumers and stakeholders to develop a plan first. Acting CE explained that he would have to consider the

implications of CAC members on interview panels but noted it does not seem like a good use of CAC's resource.

9. Live consultations: proposal to support better access to budesonide with eformoterol inhalers

Therapeutic Group Manager gave an update on the proposal to support better access to budesonide with eformoterol inhalers.

Members supported the proposal and provided some feedback. This included communicating guidelines and providing clarity between the differences in inhalers, particularly when it comes to inhalers that cannot be used for those under the age of 12. Members also suggested utilising GP liaisons and providing physical resources.

10. Update on Ombudsman report

Team Leader, Government Services provided an update on the actions progressed from the Ombudsman report.

Members were pleased to see the progress of actions and transparency.

Members noted the importance of tone for responses and providing clarity on the OIA process. Members were also interested in the process for someone who doesn't have the ability or capacity to articulate an OIA in writing, or for someone who is Māori or Pacific that would prefer a talanoa.

Team Leader, Government Services explained that OIA's can be made verbally but there was further work required from a Māori and Pacific lens.

Actions:

(5) Provide regular updates on the progress of the actions from the Ombudsman report.

(6) Share the draft Proactive Release Policy with CAC.

11. Pharmac verbal update

Director Equity and Engagement gave a verbal update:

- Ryan Perica was appointed Acting Manager Public Affairs and Government Services.
- The Board Chair has put a pause on recruitment for new CAC and PTAC members.

Actions:

(7) Confirm whether CAC can be provided the same written Pharmac verbal update reports as PTAC and the Board.

Committee only time was held.