

Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA)

Questions and Answers for consumers

The Pharmaceutical Schedule is how PHARMAC manages publicly-funded treatments for most people. We also manage, in exceptional circumstances, funding for individual patients for pharmaceutical treatments not available to them on the Schedule.

Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA) is our process for considering these applications for individual patients. A patient's doctor may be seeking funding for treatments that are not funded at all or not funded for the patient's clinical circumstances. To ensure that all patients are treated equally, NPPA must work in a way that does not undermine the Schedule decision making process.

This sheet provides you with information about NPPA to help answer some questions you may have. If you have any further questions you can ask your doctor, learn more online at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/nppa> or contact us directly at:

email: enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz

telephone: 0800 660050

PHARMAC PO Box10-254 Wellington 6143

1. What situations does NPPA cover?

There are three pathways in NPPA through which treatments may be funded for you.

Pathway	Purpose
Unusual Clinical Circumstances (UCC)	To provide a process for consideration for funding for named patients whose clinical circumstances are so unusual that PHARMAC is unlikely, for administrative reasons, to consider listing treatments for these circumstances on the Schedule.
Urgent assessment (UA)	To provide a process for PHARMAC to consider funding treatments for named patients where PHARMAC is also considering or is likely to consider the treatment for Schedule listing, but the patient's clinical circumstances justify urgent assessment, prior to a decision on Schedule listing.
Hospital Pharmaceuticals in the Community (HPC)	To allow District Health Board hospitals to fund a medicine for a patient in the community if this is more affordable for the DHB than paying, via the Schedule funding mechanism, for a different funded treatment that would otherwise need to be provided. PHARMAC's approval is required for any such funding, given DHBs' legislative obligation to act consistently with the Schedule.

If you do not meet the requirements for one pathway, we can consider whether your clinical situation could appropriately be assessed under an alternative pathway.

More information on each of these pathways, including the requirements, can be found online at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/nppa>.

2. What if I am already receiving funded treatment under the previous Exceptional Circumstances schemes?

Nothing will change. If you were approved for Exceptional Circumstances (EC) funding prior to NPPA beginning on 1 March 2012, you will continue to receive your treatment according to the EC criteria for which you were initially approved. This includes any applications for funding renewal where relevant renewal conditions are met.

3. What can I ask my doctor about NPPA and the treatment being applied for?

You should ask your doctor any questions you may have about NPPA. Some questions might be answered in this sheet. Some others you can ask your doctor might include:

- Why do I need this medicine?
- Are there other treatment options available, either other medicines or non-medicine treatments? Are these funded?
- What outcome could I expect from taking this medicine?
- When, if ever, could I expect to see some benefits from taking this medicine?
- What side effects would this medicine have?
- How would I take this medicine?
- How long would I need to take this medicine for?

There is also a separate information sheet on NPPA for your doctor available at www.pharmac.govt.nz/nppa.

4. Can I submit a NPPA application?

No. NPPA applications can only be submitted by your doctor as they have all the information we need to know.

5. What kinds of things can my doctor apply for under NPPA?

Your doctor can apply for NPPA funding for medicines or medicinal products that you might take while you are at home that can be dispensed by a community pharmacy or cancer treatments you might need in the hospital that would not otherwise be provided by the hospital.

6. How do I qualify for NPPA funding?

PHARMAC will consider your clinical circumstances and the associated health-related costs and benefits of the treatment your doctor wants to use. We will not consider your social circumstances (e.g. if you have dependant children), non-health related costs or benefits arising from treatment (e.g. if the treatment enables you to return to work) or evidence obtained from a treatment you are already being given unless that evidence can be applied to the wider group of patients you are in.

If you would like more detail about how we will assess whether your doctor's application for you should be considered under NPPA, this is explained in the NPPA Policy and the clinician NPPA information sheet, both available on our website at www.pharmac.govt.nz/nppa.

We will also have an online NPPA Results Tracker so you and your doctor can see the outcomes of previous NPPA applications (patient confidentiality maintained). If your doctor cannot find whether any of the decisions in the NPPA Results Tracker may apply to your situation, we can work this out when we assess the application your doctor submits for you.

7. My doctor thinks I meet the initial NPPA requirements, what's next?

If your doctor thinks you may qualify for NPPA and wishes to make an application for you, he or she should submit an application to PHARMAC. Application forms are available online at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/healthpros/nppa>.

8. What if I do not meet the initial NPPA requirements?

Talk to your doctor about your situation, and your doctor is welcome to contact us to discuss the process. We can sometimes fund treatments for individuals even if their circumstances do not meet the initial NPPA requirements.

9. Who decides on my application?

PHARMAC makes all decisions on NPPA applications. These decisions are based on the initial requirements being met, consideration of our decision criteria and clinical advice.

We might also receive advice from the NPPA Advisory Panel. This Advisory Panel is a group of expert clinicians that can provide advice to PHARMAC on NPPA applications, but does not make decisions.

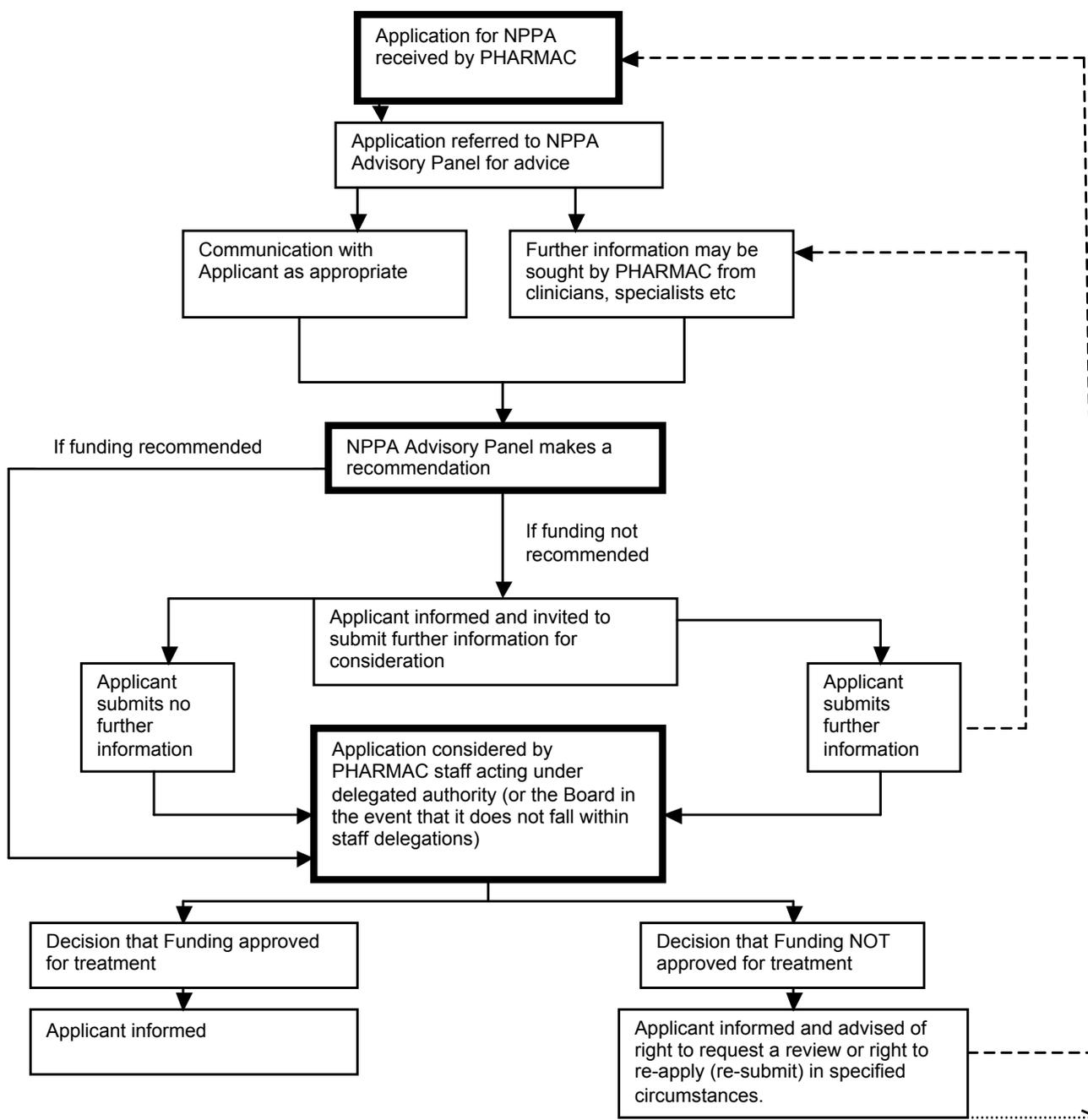
10. How do NPPA applications get considered?

Upon receipt of a NPPA application, PHARMAC staff will assess the information provided to determine if the application fits within the scheme. Even if it does, we cannot guarantee that funding will be approved because of other factors included in our decision criteria. We would then undertake more detailed assessment to determine whether, based on our decision criteria, we would fund the treatment. During the process we may present the application and, where necessary, our analysis to the NPPA Advisory Panel for its clinical advice.

If the Advisory Panel recommends that PHARMAC decline your doctor's NPPA application, we will usually contact your doctor for any further information he/she may have. This provides your doctor with a chance to question the clinical advice that PHARMAC received.

PHARMAC (either the Board or, more commonly, PHARMAC staff under delegated authority from the Board) will consider the Advisory Panel's recommendation alongside the information provided in the application, any further information we have gathered and our decision criteria. We will then make a decision.

The diagram below outlines our process for considering NPPA applications. This diagram is intended to summarise how we will consider your doctor's application made on your behalf, but is not the full and formal process. PHARMAC may vary or add further operational or administrative steps to the process.



11. When can I expect to have a decision on my application?

PHARMAC knows that sometimes a rapid decision is needed. We will prioritise applications based on the information provided about the urgency for a decision. Most applications will be assessed in line with fortnightly NPPA Advisory Panel meetings. For applications requiring urgent consideration, PHARMAC is able to consider the application at short notice, including obtaining the Advisory Panel's advice as appropriate.

Responses will be provided to your doctor as soon as possible following PHARMAC's decision. Your doctor should then discuss the outcome of your application with you.

12. How do I request a review of a decision to decline a NPPA application?

Please contact PHARMAC for information on the review process for a declined NPPA application.

email: nppa@pharmac.govt.nz

telephone: 0800 660050

PHARMAC PO Box10-254 Wellington 6143

Contacting Us

Call us on **0800 66 00 50** (between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday),

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

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

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>

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