

THE NAMED PATIENT PHARMACEUTICAL ASSESSMENT (NPPA) POLICY



What is NPPA?

NPPA is our process for considering funding for a treatment for individual patients, who are seeking funding for treatments that are not listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule (our list of publicly-funded medicines). A NPPA application must be made by a clinician.

Once PHARMAC receives a NPPA application, there are two steps that we follow to assess whether the treatment being sought could be funded.

Step 1:

PHARMAC determines whether the application meets the core principles of the NPPA policy. These questions help us to work this out:

1. Does the person have exceptional clinical circumstances?

'Exceptional' means the clinical symptoms you're experiencing are unique to you. This may be due to your urgent clinical need, or the unusual nature of your particular clinical circumstances.

2. Has the person tried all funded alternative treatments?

The Pharmaceutical Schedule does not list all the treatments that might meet the health needs of all people. When suitable funded options are available they must be tried before seeking funding through NPPA. A funded alternative treatment may be a medicine, medical device or health service that is currently funded in New Zealand.

3. Has PHARMAC previously considered the treatment for funding?

Treatments funded through NPPA must not have been previously considered by PHARMAC for the Pharmaceutical Schedule.

These questions help determine whether a NPPA application is the appropriate, or whether we need to take it through a different funding process.

To help us with step 1, we may seek clinical advice from other doctors or specialists.

If your application meets the core principles of the NPPA policy, it will progress to step 2.

If your application doesn't meet the principles of the NPPA policy, we won't progress it further. We will let your clinician know the reasons why, and give them the opportunity to provide more information about why it should progress to step 2.

Step 2:

The second step is for the application to be assessed using our Factors for Consideration, which guides our funding decisions.

The Factors for Consideration are shown in the diagram below. It presents the Factors in the four different dimensions that PHARMAC generally considers when making funding decisions (need, health benefits, costs and savings, and suitability), and shows the three different levels of impact that we usually take into account (to the person; the person's family, whanau and wider society; and to the broader health system).

The Factors help to ensure we make decisions in accordance with our Statutory Objective; to secure for eligible people in need of pharmaceuticals the best health outcomes that are reasonably achievable from pharmaceutical treatment and from within the funding provided.

We may seek additional clinical advice from other doctors or specialists at this step when assessing your application. This provides us with an objective clinical recommendation.

Once we have completed this assessment we will let your clinician know what our decision is.

The Factors for Consideration



Footnotes to the diagram

1. The person receiving the medicine or medical device must be an eligible person, as set out in the Health and Disability Services Eligibility Direction 2011 (external link) under Section 32 of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Services Act 2000 (external link) .
2. The current Māori health areas of focus are set out in PHARMAC's Te Whaioranga Strategy [PDF, 1.2 MB].
3. Government health priorities are currently communicated to PHARMAC by the Minister of Health's Letter of Expectations.
4. Pharmaceutical expenditure includes the impact on the Combined Pharmaceutical Budget (CPB) and / or DHB hospital budgets (as appropriate).

Why does it matter for my application how many people might experience the health condition?

Assessing the number of possible patients with the condition is important because:

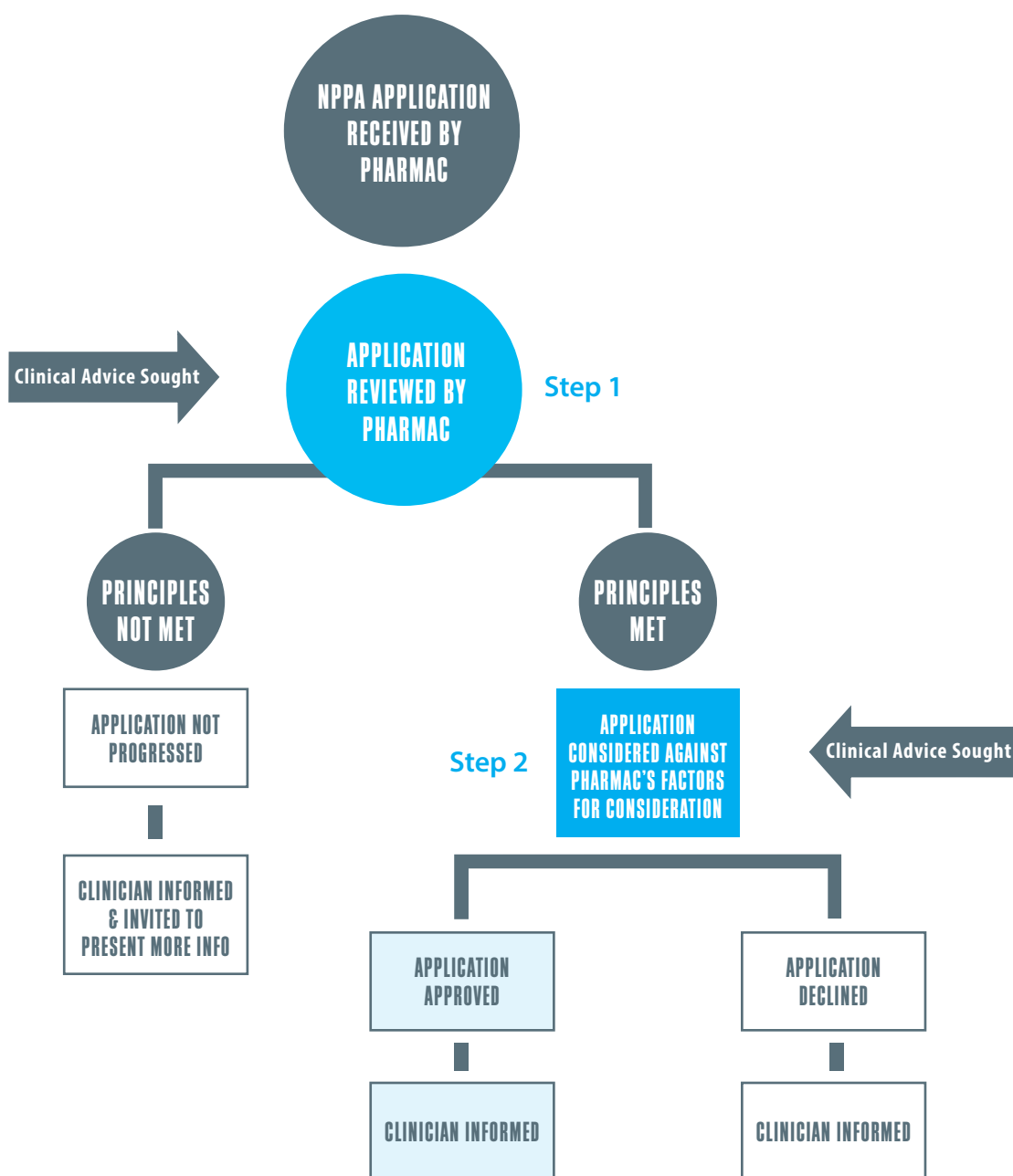
- we need to provide equitable treatments to all patients with similar clinical circumstances
- we work within a fixed budget, so must consider the overall impact on spending
- if there are many people who have the same clinical circumstances as you, then it may be more appropriate to consider the medicine through our normal process for a Pharmaceutical Schedule listing

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

We process applications as quickly as possible, but because of the need to ensure robust assessment, and to seek expert opinion where appropriate, there may be some time between application and a decision.

We will inform your clinician as soon as possible following PHARMAC's decision. Meantime we'll communicate directly with your clinician regarding the progress of our assessment. If you have any questions about an application for funding for a treatment for you, your doctor is the best person to help.

Brief overview of the NPPA Process



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