

Mō te tūranga | Position description

Position title: Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) Member

Reports to: PTAC Chair

Te pūtake o te tūranga | Purpose of the position

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) is a statutory advisory committee established by the Pharmac Board. Members of PTAC are appointed by the Director-General of Health in consultation with the Pharmac Board.

PTAC is comprised of experienced health practitioners with expertise in general evidence assessment/critical appraisal and with experience in clinical fields including, but not limited to, clinical pharmacology, internal medicine, general practice, clinical pharmacy (“PTAC Members”). PTAC may also have one or more members who is a consumer (“PTAC Consumer Members”), to provide a consumer perspective to PTAC discussions.

The primary purpose of PTAC is to provide Pharmac with objective advice on community and hospital pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceuticals in this context include medicines, medical devices and related things, consistent with the enabling legislation for Pharmac.

PTAC is complemented by a number of Specialist Advisory Committees, which provide advice on pharmaceuticals within a specific therapy area. Specialist Advisory Committees are chaired by PTAC Members, and each PTAC Member will sit on or chair two to four Specialist Advisory Committees.

PTAC Members are usually appointed for a term of three years. Members can be considered for reappointment for up to three terms, with a total period of service of nine years.

More details of the roles of PTAC and Specialist Advisory Committees can be found in the [PTAC Terms of Reference](#) and the [Specialist Advisory Committee Terms of Reference](#) (2021). All Members are expected to be familiar with these documents.

Pharmac | Te Pātaka Whaioranga

Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga’s legislative objective is: to secure for eligible people in need of pharmaceuticals, the best health outcomes that are reasonably achievable from pharmaceutical treatment and from within the amount of funding provided.

Pharmac’s purpose is to deliver the best health outcomes from New Zealand’s investment in medicines and medical devices. As a Crown Entity, Pharmac - Te Pātaka Whaioranga must give effect to the Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Health 2024-27 and the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022.

Within Pae Ora, the Crown’s intention to give effect to the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) is set out in the health sector principles, which, among other things, are aimed at improving the health sector for Māori and improving hauora Māori outcomes.

Ngā uaratanga | Values

Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga’s values ground behaviour and guide thinking. [Learn about the meaning of the values.](#)



Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga’s decision-making framework – the Factors for Consideration

The Factors for Consideration are the framework Pharmac uses when making funding decisions. The four main areas are outlined below.

- Health Need - considering the impact of the disease, condition or illness on the person, their family or whānau (including the health needs and perspectives of Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled peoples including tāngata whaikaha Māori, and other populations identified by the [Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027](#) to have high health need), wider society, and the broader New Zealand health system
- Health Benefit - the potential health gain (or loss) from the medicine or medical device being considered
- Costs and savings - the health-related costs and savings to the person and their family, whānau and to wider society, and the costs and savings to pharmaceutical budget and the wider health system
- Suitability - the non-clinical features of the medicine or medical device that might impact on health outcomes

For further information on the Factors for Consideration go to:

<https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/medicines/how-medicines-are-funded/factors-for-consideration>

How PTAC supports Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga to achieve its objective

PTAC Members:

- provide objective advice to Pharmac on pharmaceuticals for use in the community and hospitals
- make recommendations to the Pharmac Board on the funding of pharmaceuticals based on Pharmac’s Factors for Consideration decision-making framework (see above)
- initiate, subject to the prior agreement of Pharmac, reviews of any policy adopted by Pharmac in relation to the management of the Pharmaceutical Schedule, and provide reports or make recommendations to Pharmac arising from those reviews
- consider, report, or make recommendations, to Pharmac on any other matters that may be referred to it by Pharmac

PTAC Members also chair and support the Specialist Advisory Committees, which provide advice on community and hospital pharmaceuticals.

In their advisory role to the Crown, all PTAC Members are expected to ensure that their advice reflects the Crown's obligations and expectations under te Tiriti o Waitangi and the health sector principles.

Ngā tino mahi o te tūranga | Key position requirements

PTAC meetings are held in Wellington at least four times a year. Meetings are 1–2 days long and usually require at least 30–40 hours of preparation time.

PTAC Members are expected, prior to each PTAC meeting, to:

- critically appraise all papers and information provided in the applications being considered by the Committee at the meeting
- analyse the subjects under consideration, forming an initial professional view for discussion at the meeting of the strengths and weaknesses of the applications.
- be a discussion lead when requested, developing a presentation for the committee considering a specific paper or topic

At the meeting, all Members are required to provide their view on each pharmaceutical under consideration based on the available scientific evidence, or expert opinion in the absence of scientific evidence. Members are required to be prepared to discuss issues related to these subjects with other members in a professional and constructive manner. PTAC is expected to reach a consensus on a recommendation to Pharmac for each application reviewed.

Following the meeting all PTAC Members are expected to contribute to the finalisation of the meeting record in a timely manner.

PTAC Members are also expected to sit on and/or chair two to four Specialist Advisory Committees. Specialist Advisory Committees meet approximately every 12 to 18 months, or more frequently if necessary.

Advisory Committee meetings are held in person or online¹. Pharmac also hosts workshops, usually annually, which all Members are expected to attend.

PTAC Members work with the PTAC Chair, other Members, and Pharmac kaimahi, including the Expert Advice Coordinators, Manager Expert Advisory and Director Advice and Assessment/Chief Medical Officer. They also engage with other Pharmac kaimahi as required and work closely with Specialist Advisory Committee Members.

PTAC Members must conduct themselves in accordance with the PTAC [Terms of Reference](#) at all times.

Members are remunerated for their time (meeting attendance, preparatory work, or in relation to ad hoc clinical advice requests) as per the fees set according to the [Cabinet Fees Framework](#). Travel-related expenses to attend meetings are paid for by Pharmac.

Ngā pūkenga e hiahiatia ana | Ideal person specification

PTAC Members should be registered with their relevant professional body, preferably be in active clinical practice, and should ideally have:

¹ Advisory meetings may be held online, to help manage costs and/or reduce carbon emissions. At least one PTAC meeting per year will be held online.

- excellent evidence assessment/critical appraisal skills
- good general knowledge of pharmaceuticals
- at least five years' experience in their vocational field
- a good understanding of evidence-based medicine in clinical practice
- understanding of the health sector within Aotearoa New Zealand
- knowledge of the diversity of health need and access to treatment within Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes a good understanding of the health needs of priority populations identified by the [Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027](#).
- understanding of, and commitment to achieving, health and medicines access equity
- an understanding of te Tiriti o Waitangi and a commitment to applying it in carrying out their duties as set out in the Pae Ora Health Sector principles
- the ability to differentiate between an individual and population health perspective on issues
- good presentation skills
- an understanding of the trade-offs required when working to a fixed budget
- the ability to work constructively in a group and accept consensus decision-making.

Members are not appointed as representatives of their primary employer or any other organisation.

The Director General of Health and Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga are committed to ensuring that decisions on pharmaceuticals meet the needs of all New Zealanders. A diverse and inclusive PTAC allows Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga to understand and best serve Aotearoa New Zealand and make better and more equitable decisions. We value diversity and inclusion and welcome applicants of all gender identities, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, disability and religions.

As a pro-equity organisation, Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga is committed to improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders, including those with the highest needs (Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, women, and people living rurally).

This position description sets out the key requirements of the position. Specific duties within the scope of this role may change in response to the environment that Pharmac – Te Pātaka Whaioranga operates within.

Position description last updated: October 2024