



August 14, 2009

Mr Mike Bignall
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Tēnā koe

Re: Proposals regarding diabetes management products.

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the above proposals as diabetes is one of the most formidable health burdens and challenges we face both now and in the future. How this chronic disease is managed will largely depend on the products that are funded, and education, usually by nurses, in their optimal and appropriate use.

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) is the leading professional body of nurses and nursing union in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 43 000 nurses, midwives and allied health workers. Te Runanga o Aotearoa is the arm through which our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is articulated. We have consulted widely with staff and members and this submission is particularly informed by the New Zealand College of Practice Nurses (NZNO) whose members have considerable expertise and experience in the management and treatment of diabetes.

NZNO notes that while diabetes is widespread throughout all communities, it is disproportionately high in those communities where there are the greatest disparities in access to healthcare and health status. For this reason, NZNO believes that Pharmac needs to consider a greater financial subsidy of diabetes management products to ensure that those with the greatest need and the least access have access to products which will not only improve their quality of life,

but will increase productivity, reduce hospital admissions and reduce disparities. Research evaluating participation in a systematic and fully funded diabetes programme in primary healthcare, for instance, found that "...the ethnic groups with the worst initial figures showed most improvement"¹.

There is a significant gap between guidelines and practice and the Ministry of Health targets for diabetes remain difficult to achieve without good control due to inadequate monitoring of glycaemia. Monitoring, the cornerstone of diabetes care, impacts on:

- Efficacy
- Treatment adjustment
- Motivation/adherence/blood glucose levels
- Target Hba1c levels
- Reduced complications – long term

The complexity of managing diabetes and other factors demands an multi-disciplinary team approach with targeted access and funding to management tools such as monitoring kits, and more user/ client friendly strips to enable diabetes self management where clinically indicated.

NZNO considers the key goals should be optimising measurement of glycaemic control and reducing hospital admissions. We recommend that Pharmac considers:

- A greater level of subsidy to aid access for maximal number of patients;
- Keeping the subsidy to most well known and used brands, OPTIUM and ACCUCHECK; and
- Funding meters for patients/clients NOT on sulphonyureas, to aid earlier more aggressive management and treatment titration.

Nāku, nā



Marilyn Head

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¹ Hosnah Agban et al. 2008. *Trends in the management of risk of diabetes complications*. School of Population Health, University of Auckland.

http://www.diabetes.org.nz/news/nz_news/trends_in_the_management_of_risk_of_diabetes_complications

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NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) is the leading professional body of nurses and nursing union in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 43 000 nurses, midwives and allied health workers.

Te Runanga o Aotearoa is the arm through which our Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership is articulated. Our members include nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora, health care workers and allied health professionals.

The NZNO vision is “Freed to care, Proud to nurse”. Our members enhance the health and wellbeing of all people of Aotearoa New Zealand and are united in their professional and industrial aspirations to achieve a safe, sustainable health system for all New Zealanders.