

19 March 2021

Tēnā koe

PHARMAC improving health equity on all advisory committees

Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa, New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to comment on PHARMAC's consultation - Improving health equity on all advisory committees.

NZNO has consulted its members and staff in the preparation of this submission, in particular members of; Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa (Te Rūnanga), Gastroenterology College of Nurses, College of Critical Care Nurses, professional nursing, and policy advisers. NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing 51,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment matters. NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvements of health outcomes for all people of Aotearoa New Zealand through influencing health, employment, and social policy development. Furthermore, we share the intent of the Ministry of Health's definition of equity which applies equally to NZNO's work across professional, industrial, and member activities.

NZNO acknowledges PHARMAC's commitment and courage to enhance and reinforce the addition of health equity expertise and diversity on all clinical advisory committees. This extends to including a multidisciplinary team approach to all health professional members for example; registered nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors, pharmacists, consumers, Māori, Pacific and equity specialists.

Furthermore, this must include PHARMAC's willingness to develop or strengthen existing equity frameworks to ensure the provision of guiding principles and criteria for pharmaceuticals and devices. PHARMAC also needs to consider all unintended consequences of these new pharmaceuticals and devices, thereby, demonstrating an equitable approach to access and use.

Our members have articulated their support to ensuring that health equity expertise, knowledge, and diversity are reflected across all of PHARMAC's advisory committees. Therefore, as Māori health professionals, Te Rūnanga are committed to ensuring equity of access to culturally appropriate services for our whānau, hapū, and iwi. Additionally, we recognise that there is no national consistency to accessing health care across the motu, with many whānau affected and afflicted by 'postcode' access to health care services when living outside the urban centres.

We encourage PHARMAC to develop and subsequently implement a proactive engagement process for working with communities to help people improve equity of access and to reduce health disparities. Members have provided specific feedback to strengthen the document under the following headings:

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Transparency of decision making must include:

- Specific decision making processes for diseases (for example Crohn's and Colitis) and the funding of pharmaceuticals;
- An equity framework to guide the assessment of funding and resources; and
- Awareness of current inequities and issues in accessing pharmaceuticals and devices across communities, particularly in rural communities where pharmacies which have limited opening hours.

Support for consumer representation to:

- Enable consumers to share their perspectives and advice formally, through the committees;
- Enhance the diversity of the committees; and
- Strengthen health equity knowledge within the committees.

Support for a Māori advisory body that must have:

- Representatives from tangata whenua, from both rural and urban areas;
- Clear criteria for choosing representatives;
- Included Māori nurse practitioners and nurse representatives; and
- Kaumātua representation.

To conclude, I have chosen the following whakataukāi:

Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou;
Seek after wisdom for the sake of your wellbeing.

This whakataukāi highlights that wisdom and wellbeing will come when we ask questions with a genuine desire to understand the answers and will guide our future mahi working together to ensure equitable outcomes for the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

Nāku noa nā



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