



27 March 2014

Medsafe  
PO Box 5013  
**WELLINGTON 6145**

Tēnā koe

### **51st meeting of the Medicines Classification Committee**

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed move to pharmacist supply of selected oral contraceptives. NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand, representing over 46,000 members, including nurses, midwives, students and allied health workers.

NZNO supports an expanded framework for prescribing and we draw your attention to our position statement on [independent nurse prescribing](#). NZNO proudly acknowledges the experience, expertise and leadership that Family Planning New Zealand (FPNZ) consistently demonstrates in its provision of contraceptive services, and in training nurses and doctors in this field.

Having consulted with members and staff, in particular members of the College of Primary Health Care Nurses and Women's Health Section, and professional nursing advisers, NZNO offers its strong support of FPNZ's submission and recommendations to the Committee to:

- allow more primary care nurses to prescribe contraception by reviewing the protocols for nurse prescribing through the Nursing Council;
- assess the proposed move to pharmacist supply of oral contraception for its potential effects on health equity and reducing disparities;
- ensure high-quality training of non-medical providers of oral contraception, especially in the assessment of risks to women's health, teaching how to take pills correctly, and training in sensitive treatment of women seeking contraception.

Should the proposal go ahead we support FPNZ's recommendations that pharmacists:

- have Collaborative Practice Agreements i.e. work with a doctor who will audit their practice;
- complete a training programme of at least 2 days duration; and
- have a staged approach i.e. the pharmacist would provide oral contraception only for those women continuing to take combined contraceptive pills (i.e. not initial supply of pills); a doctor would audit each provision within 5 days for at least the first 20

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occasions; and the pharmacist should then be assessed to ensure they are ready to progress to initial supply of the combined pill.

NZNO agrees the proposal may improve access for some women living in rural and isolated communities, and may help increase youth access to health care, though cost is likely to remain a barrier for this group. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of outcomes should occur throughout the implementation, particularly in respect of its impact on uptake of long-acting reversible contraception, which has been found to be more effective in practice than the contraceptive pill<sup>1</sup>.

Nāku noa, nā



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## REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup>Winner B., Peipert, JF., Zhao Q., Buckel, C., Madden, T., Allsworth JE and Secura G. (2012). Effectiveness of Long-acting Reversible Contraception. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 2012;366:1998-2007.

## NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION (NZNO)

NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand. NZNO represents over 46,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment related matters. NZNO is affiliated to the International Council of Nurses and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

NZNO promotes and advocates for professional excellence in nursing by providing leadership, research and education to inspire and progress the profession of nursing. NZNO represents members on employment and industrial matters and negotiates collective employment agreements.

NZNO embraces Te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvement of the health status and outcomes of all peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand through influencing health, employment and social policy development enabling quality nursing care provision. NZNO's vision is *Freed to care, Proud to nurse*.