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Geraldine MacGibbon  
Senior Therapeutic Group Manager  
PHARMAC

Email: [july25consult@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:july25consult@pharmac.govt.nz)

Kia ora Geraldine

### **Proposal to remove restrictions from various pharmaceuticals and devices**

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation welcomes the opportunity to provide brief feedback on the above proposal. We have consulted with members and staff who support the proposal.

The Aotearoa College of Diabetes Nurses strongly support the change regarding insulin pump and consumable funding, saying that it is a sensible correction of an omission noticed by a number of diabetes health professionals. They note that it will allow access to funded pumps and consumables for a population that will gain good benefit from them.

The Gerontology Nurse Section similarly welcomes increased access to gabapentin, which is being used more often.

While not strictly relevant to this particular proposal, we would like to take this opportunity to draw PHARMAC's attention to an issue our members have raised concerning access to funded medicines for people with allergies. Lactose intolerance, for example, is not uncommon, but lactose is used as a diluent for soluble drugs and as a filler in capsules and tablets in an appreciable proportion of prescription, and to a lesser extent, over the counter drugs<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, gluten and gelatin are common allergens which are often used in medicines and, despite the tiny concentrations, may cause problems for some people. Nor is it clear, even for widely used medicines such as paracetamol, whether they contain such substances, as there is no consistency in listing excipients. Equivalent lactose-free or other hypoallergenic medications are generally much more expensive. Without comprehensive funded drug options available for allergic reactions, there are likely to be cost access barriers for people with allergies, including children. NZNO suggests that this is an area that PHARMAC could consider.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.healio.com/orthopedics/journals/ortho/%7Ba150aeee-80ec-4de5-bea4-f229f2a5386f%7D/lactose-the-hidden-culprit-in-medication-intolerance>

We would be happy to discuss any aspect of the above.

Ngā mihi

Nāku noa, nā



**Marilyn Head**

**Senior Policy Analyst**

Phone: 04 494 6372

Email: [marilynh@nzno.org.nz](mailto:marilynh@nzno.org.nz)

#### 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*.