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Tēnā koe Bronwyn

Proposal for sole subsidised supply of a contraceptive implant

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the above proposal which is informed by consultation with members of NZNO's colleges and sections, in particular the Women's Health Section, and registered nurses and professional nurse advisers with relevant experience and expertise.

The feedback we've received concurs with what is outlined in Family Planning New Zealand's (FPNZ) submission, which we support, that the Jadelle implant is not the preferred clinical choice in comparison with the more easily fitted and equally effective Implanon NX, which has fewer complications. Accordingly, NZNO does not support sole subsidised supply of the Jadelle implant; in addition, we recommend that PHARMAC considers subsidising Implanon NXT.

Clinical nurse specialists with extensive experience in fitting and removing a range of subdermal contraceptive implants have found that it is quicker and easier to use a single rather than multiple rod implant system, such as Jadelle. They find the insertion technique easier and there are fewer complications with removals, as there is considerably less chance of a rod being placed too deeply to enable full palpation, in which case additional resources such as ultrasound for location, and more complex procedures (two incisions rather than one) are generally required¹. This increases costs and potential trauma to the patient.

We note that there was similar consensus among GPs at a GP clinical medical education (CME) session in Counties Manukau last week, who reported difficulties in removing the Jadelle implants. While some clinicians prefer the Jadelle implant because of its longer lifespan (five years rather than three), in general it seems that both here and overseas, the preference is to use the single rod system.

¹ Shulman, L and Gabriel, H. (2006). Management and localization strategies for the nonpalpable Implanon rod. *Contraception*. Apr; 73(4):325-330.

As FPNZ advised PHARMAC of the above earlier in the year, we assume that the additional resourcing costs associated with the removal of Jadelle implants have been factored into the proposal. Nevertheless, there are potential physiological and psychological risks with contraceptive implants - particularly where problems requiring removal of the device have already been experienced - and we strongly advise against exposing women to avoidable or more complex procedures than necessary, even if 'the price is right'.

The younger age and fertility profile of Māori and Pacific women in comparison with Pākeha (Aotearoa New Zealand/ European ethnicity) indicate that they will be disproportionately affected by any decision on contraception and we strongly advocate that they are afforded the contraceptive implant that best suits their needs and minimises potential adverse impacts. Sole subsidised supply of Jadelle implants would reduce access to the preferred implant, and thus limit clinicians' choice, as it would be unlikely that this vulnerable population group would be able to pay for the alternative.

NZNO does not support sole subsidised supply of the Janelle implant and urges you consider subsidising Implanon NXT to ensure clinicians have access to contraceptive implants that best suit consumer needs.

Nāku noa, nā

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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.*

