
Submission form

To help us to consider your submission we are asking that you focus on the following questions. There is the opportunity to provide additional feedback at the end. We expect to get a high response and ask that, where you can, you are concise. Once you have completed your submission please send it to: pharmacreview@health.govt.nz

Note that submissions are subject to the Official Information Act and may, therefore, be released in part or full.

If your submission contains any confidential information please state this within submission, and set out clearly which parts you consider should be withheld and the grounds under the Official Information Act 1982 that you believe apply. We will consult with submitters when responding to requests under the Official Information Act.

Submission questions

Tell us about your current experience with PHARMAC and how it functions

1. What is your understanding of what PHARMAC does?

PHARMAC is the New Zealand government agency that decides which medicines and related products are funded in New Zealand. The goal being to give New Zealanders access to medicines and related products to live healthy lives

2. What has been your experience of working with PHARMAC?

NZNO has a Memorandum of Understanding with PHARMAC to work collaboratively. PHARMAC also has a collaborative relationship with Te Rūnanga sponsor the Indigenous Nurses Conference and the scholarships for nurses who want to become nurse prescribers / nurse practitioners

The collaborative relationship is likely to foster and grow Maori health professionals which aligns with the Te Tiriti Articles and PHARMAC's aspirations

PHARMAC provides opportunities to engage with the wider public in addition to those working in the health sector as part of their consultation process when looking at medicines and medical devices

PHARMAC looks to purchase and reduce duplication of medicines and medical devices that in turn reflects meeting our needs at the best possible price

3. What are the challenges with PHARMAC's functions for funding medicines and devices?

- Individual and not collective demand for specific medications
- Medical conditions / diseases competing for limited funds
- Equity for whom, versus te Tiriti obligations
- A small nation competing in a worldwide market
- Media storms / Publicity creating noise and not necessarily appropriate messages
- Political intervention e.g. Funding for Herceptin
- Political cycle – Unsettling for the organisation and sector
- Public pressure
- Comparison between New Zealand and Australia re: availability of medications – not necessarily an equal playing field
- The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement - trade negotiations re: Patent restriction on medications
- Limited funding
- Budget cycle and competing priorities
- COVID and its ongoing implication for funding and access to medications
- Availability of regular medications in a Covid world with focus on vaccine production and lack to transport options
- NZ manufactures limited amounts of medications – dependant on overseas sources

What do you know about PHARMAC's processes and how they work?

4. What do you think works well with the processes PHARMAC uses to assess the funding of medicines and medical devices?
- PTAC –Professional and Technical Advisory Group – expert group input to the purchase of medicines and medical devices
 - Guidelines and criteria
 - Section 29 Special Authority
 - Preferred medications prescribing lists for District Health Boards through to individual prescribers, with restrictions on some groups re: what they can prescribe. For example: General Practitioners and Pharmacists
 - Restricted prescribing one to three months dependant on supply
 - Customer feedback
 - Education for prescribers
 - Training for health professional
 - Maintenance of the PHARMAC Schedule – transparency of medications available to prescribers

5. What do you think are the barriers to accessing medicines and devices?

- Funding
- Costs per medications per person – prohibitive
- Political pressure
- Supply and demand of medicines and medical devices
- Public scrutiny
- Rare diseases and the inability to negotiate good prices
- Majority versus minority – who benefits
- The Dallas Buyers Club phenomenon
- Co-payments
- Private Insurance – part contribution / administration
- Education / health literacy – who delivers on this?

6. Is there any other country that does it better? What is it that it does better and would any of those systems apply here?

- NZNO is not able to compare PHARMAC to any other country / system

What should PHARMAC's role include in the future?

7. How might PHARMAC look in the future? And what needs to change for this to happen?
- A te Tiriti Board – that reflects the community they serve for example a 50/50% split
 - Demonstrated active protection as part of the te Tiriti
 - PHARMAC staff need to reflect the community they serve
 - More engagement with the community – reflecting the collective voice within PHARMACs planning and decision making
 - Connected health – The proposed Maori Health Authority and Health New Zealand, and Public Health and any funded health provider collaborating for the greater good

8. Are there additional or different things that PHARMAC should be doing?

- Education, training – clinicians, family and whānau
- Listening to peoples experiences to improve service deliver
- Public safety – articulate its importance
- Environmental sustainability
- Disposal of medications when no longer required, confirm sector wider responses – not the toilet

9. What do the wider changes to the Health and Disability system mean for PHARMAC?

- Where do the decisions sit for the purchase of medications and medical devices?
- Where does the Maori Heath Authority sit between the new structures purchasing power?
- What is the power play between the new organisations and what does that mean for PHARMAC?
- Where does the accountability for funding sit?

How should PHARMAC address the need for greater equity in the decisions it takes, in particular for Māori, Pacific and disabled people?

10. How well does PHARMAC reflect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi?

- Do you mean to say Articles as we do not believe them to be Principles with te Tiriti?
- Does the Maori responsiveness strategy Te Whaioranga align with PHARMACs treaty obligations and their work?
- Do we assume that there are monitoring and audit processes in place?
- Employment – do PHARMAC staff reflect Maori, Pasifika etc.?
- Do PHARMAC need a Maori Advisory group?
- Do PHARMAC need to use co-design when looking at service delivery?
- Does PHARMAC's Governance level reflect the communities they serve?

11. How can PHARMAC achieve more equitable outcomes?

- Talk to people
- Identify what is the priority for those in the health sector, patients, family and whānau.

Additional feedback

Is there anything else that you think the Review Panel should consider?

Protracted response time to approve medications that have been proven overseas to benefit the patients. For example diabetes medication for the management of type 2 diabetes that has been available overseas for 5 years or more. SGLT2 inhibitors, we are still waiting for the second medication (GLP1RA) to be approved by MedSafe.

Diabetes devices are another issue – patients can access insulin pumps but there is no access to funded glucose sensors. The latest version of the pump relies on being paired with the appropriate sensor to be able to help in the management of type 1 diabetes. The cheaper version of the glucose sensor is also not funded but it is good tool to help patients

manage their diabetes better. Improved control of diabetes means less damage to the patients, less expense for the country, less renal failure or cardiovascular disease.

Contact information

Your feedback is important to us. If you are comfortable for us to get in touch if we have any questions or points of clarification regarding your feedback, please provide your name and contact email address below.

Name	Lucia Bercinkas Senior Policy Analyst
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Organisation	New Zealand Nurses Organisation

If you do not want your personal details to be shared for any other purpose (for example if we receive a request for information under the Official Information Act) please signal this using the box below.

I do not want my personal details to be shared for any purpose other than this review.

Thank you for providing your feedback.

Tēnā koe mō tō tuku urupare mai.