



21 August 2015

2015-08/006
T:/D102

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By email: consultation@pharmac.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

Proposal in relation to Dietitian Prescribers

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above proposal which we warmly support. Like nurses, dietitians are health practitioners whose competence and fitness to practice is assured and regulated by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. The Act both protects public safety and provides robust processes to facilitate health workforce flexibility and innovation and ensure the efficient and equitable delivery of quality healthcare.

It has been disappointing, therefore, to see the glacially slow, disjointed progress in extending prescribing and access to funded medicines beyond the medical fraternity, to all health practitioners who have the required knowledge and competence to use medications appropriately. It has been even more disappointing and frustrating to see that even when prescribing has been included in the expanded practice of expert practitioners, access to subsidised medicines has not automatically followed. Because of this, many New Zealanders do not have access to the medicines they need, at the affordable cost that PHARMAC has negotiated, and that they are entitled to. Where there are cost barriers, health disparities persist. Improving access to health care and affordable medicines is essential to reduce health demand and unacceptable health disparities.

Deleting rule 3.5 of Section A of the Pharmaceutical Schedule (Dietitians' Prescriptions) which currently limits subsidies being paid on dietitians' prescriptions to a specified list of products, to enable dietitians to prescribe anything for subsidy that is consistent with their scope of practice is an essential step towards integrated health care. NZNO strongly supports the proposal and looks forward to the further removal of anachronistic regulatory barriers affecting the ability of expert practitioners to fully utilise their scope of practice to ensure cost effective delivery of equitable health care.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marilyn Head'.

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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*.