



**Your Community Pharmacist:** the health professional you see most often

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9 November 2011

Stephen Woodruffe  
Therapeutic Group Manager  
PHARMAC

Sent via e-mail to: [stephen.woodruffe@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:stephen.woodruffe@pharmac.govt.nz)

Dear Stephen

**RE: PROPOSAL FOR CANDESARTAN – ACCESS WIDENING AND SOLE SUPPLY**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the above proposal.

The Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (Inc) (the Guild) is a national membership organisation representing community pharmacy owners. We provide leadership on all issues affecting the sector and advocate for the business interests of community pharmacy.

The Guild supports the intention of widening the Special Authority for candesartan from 1 August 2012. This change would mean that the Special Authority application process is simplified by removing the prerequisite for patients to have either congestive heart failure or raised blood pressure, in addition to fulfilling other criteria. Widening the Special Authority application process will also allow a greater range of patients to be treated with an angiotension II antagonist medication.

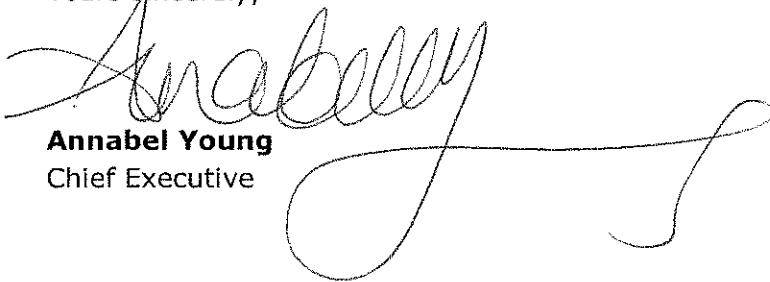
The Guild also supports the removal of the daily dose dispensing restrictions. The change will reduce patient confusion when there is an increase in dose, and may also increase patient compliance by reducing the need to halve tablets. Pharmacists' time will also be saved on counselling patients about the reason for having to change the strength of their medication and further ensuring the patient is fully aware of the new dosage of medication.

Although the proposed changes are not to be implemented until 1 August 2012, we wish to highlight the importance of there being adequate availability of the new brand, in order to avoid stock issues. Inadequate availability of medicines has been a problem in the past, such as when atorvastatin (Lorstat) and Apo-amlodipine became fully funded. When stock is not available, pharmacists can in some cases substitute the funded brand

to an alternative clinically equivalent brand, as per the recent amendment to the Medicines Regulations (Reg 42(4)). However, there are some instances where there is no alternative brand option available and pharmacists then find themselves in a position where they need to contact the patient's general practitioner to prescribe an alternative medication until the original medication is back in stock. A lack of available stock can therefore cause significant disruption and confusion for patients.

Thank you for taking the time to read our feedback. If you have any questions about our feedback, please contact our Guild Policy Advisor, Jasmine Freemantle, at [jasmine.freemantle@pgnz.org.nz](mailto:jasmine.freemantle@pgnz.org.nz) or 04 802 8205.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annabel Young', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Annabel Young**  
Chief Executive