

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

1 November 2011

# **Guild welcomes amendments to the Pharmaceutical Schedule**

The Guild welcomes changes announced by PHARMAC to the General Rules in the Pharmaceutical Schedule that will allow pharmacists to amend certain types of prescriptions.

Guild Chief Executive, Annabel Young, says the Guild supports the intention to reduce some of the administrative requirements for pharmacists and practitioners, such as allowing pharmacists to annotate the prescription, thus, removing the need to have to send it back to the prescriber.

As of today (Tuesday 1 November), pharmacists will be able to annotate a prescription where they have evidence that a patient is eligible for a subsidy via a specialist's recommendation, without requiring a counter signature or endorsement from the prescriber.

Where the pharmacy has an electronic record of an endorsement from a previous prescription written by the same prescriber, the pharmacist may annotate the prescription accordingly.

"The changes are common sense ones," Ms Young said.

Pharmacists will now be able to amend the prescription, without requiring a signature from the prescriber, even if it results in an increased cost to DHBs. This can only occur when it is not practicable to dispense the medicine prescribed.

Any annotation would not be able to override any other Schedule restriction. This rule change is intended to allow pharmacists to provide a funded product when an out-of-stock issue occurs for a particular product, without requiring the prescriber's signature or notification from PHARMAC.

Pharmacists will be required to annotate the prescription with the reason for the amendment for audit purposes. PHARMAC says the intent of this change is to reduce the administrative burden for pharmacists and prescribers and its effects on the market are to be monitored.

"As a rule, pharmacists are methodical and thorough professional people who have their patients' best interest very much in mind. They will take maximum care in ensuring that the medicine dispensed is suitable and appropriate," Ms Young said.

## **ENDS**

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*Notes:*

- The Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (Inc) is a national membership organisation representing community pharmacy owners. We provide leadership on all issues affecting the sector and we advocate for the business interests of community pharmacy.
- For additional information on the Guild and community pharmacy, please go to [www.pgnz.org.nz](http://www.pgnz.org.nz).