

MEDIA RELEASE

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Community pharmacy welcomes an increased role in warfarin monitoring

An announcement by the Health Minister, Tony Ryall, that the Government intends to launch a nationwide pharmacy-based warfarin monitoring service is welcome news for the future of community pharmacy, says the Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand President, Karen Crisp.

Ms Crisp says the announcement by Mr Ryall is an endorsement of the important role that community pharmacists play in primary healthcare.

“Community pharmacists are keen for their skills to be fully utilised in primary healthcare, to demonstrate how they can make a difference. This is a tremendous show of support by the Government for the pharmacy sector and is based on the significant results from the Pharmaceutical Society’s work on proving the benefits of having a warfarin monitoring service delivered by pharmacists.”

Mr Ryall made the announcement for the Community Pharmacist-led Anticoagulation Monitoring Services project (CPAMS) to be implemented nationally when he spoke at the New Zealand Hospital Pharmacists’ Association (NZHPA) conference in Tauranga on Friday last week.

Ms Crisp says Guild members will welcome this news because it is further acknowledgement of the future direction of community pharmacy. It is inevitable and sensible that pharmacists will become increasingly involved in managing patient healthcare as health system resources come under increasing pressure.

In a media release last month, the Government said conducting warfarin blood testing in pharmacies would save the health system approximately \$10 million a year.

The estimate is based on a pilot project involving 15 community pharmacies. An independent evaluation of the project by The University of Auckland confirmed that management of warfarin treatment by pharmacists is safe and convenient for patients with heart disease.

The evaluation report recommended that the pharmacy model of warfarin management should be rolled out to all eligible patients across the country. It concluded that if 50% of current warfarin patients were moved to the pharmacy management model, savings could amount to \$111 million over five years.

The project, overseen by Health Workforce New Zealand (HWNZ) in conjunction with the New Zealand Pharmaceutical Society, involved pharmacists conducting finger prick blood tests and advising patients on the management of their medication.

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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.