

17 April 2023

PHARMAC
PO Box 10254
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

Sent via email to: consult@pharmac.govt.nz and enquiries@pharmac.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposal to implement a schedule funding change to spacer devices, allowing them to be funded via prescription or by direct provision by a pharmacist with a zero-dollar co-payment

Thank you for the opportunity to propose a schedule funding change affecting spacer devices.

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

Our proposal focuses on Guild members' concerns around general economic, funding and supply issues. Guild submissions should not be taken as any endorsement of, or any attempt to comment on, issues of safety, efficacy or individual patient utility.

We are proposing a change in the Pharmac funding schedule for all the spacer devices currently listed in the schedule from "Funded on PSO only" to "Funded on PSO (for bulk supply to health practitioners) **and funded (with restrictions) on a prescription, including direct provision by a pharmacist**". This can be compared to the prescribing of a nicotine replacement therapy by a pharmacist under the provisions in Part I of Section A of the Pharmac Community Schedule. We further propose that there be no co-payment to patients when obtaining the spacer device on prescription from a prescriber or via direct provision by a pharmacist.

Supporting our proposal, we would like you to consider the following:

- We believe, via feedback from our members, that providing spacer devices fully funded on prescription from a prescriber or direct provision by a pharmacist will increase equitable access to spacer devices, and thus help improve patient compliance and adherence, medicine delivery and therapeutic outcomes, and minimise adverse effects.
- Many prescribers are not aware that spacer devices are currently only funded via the PSO mechanism or choose not to write a PSO for a single item so it can be supplied to a patient.
- Patients often present to pharmacies to replace old or lost/broken spacer devices, and then need to be referred to a prescriber to be able to access something which a pharmacist could simply have provided. This adds to workforce pressures and diminishes capacity at the general practice.
- Restrictions of a maximum of two spacers per prescription from a prescriber or by direct provision from a pharmacist should prevent wastage but allow for a "home and school/office" approach, with adherence in mind.
- As pharmacists are easily accessible to both patients and healthcare providers, they are ideally positioned to play an important role in providing patients with practical recommendations on inhaler use, education on, and continuous assessment of, optimal inhaler technique and provision of devices, such as spacers, to optimise medicine delivery and adherence, and in doing so, improve disease control and quality of life, reduce emergency hospital admissions and meet health objectives across the motu.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal. If you have any questions please contact our Senior Advisory Pharmacists, Martin Lewis (martin@pgnz.org.nz, 04 802 8218) or Cathy Martin (cathy@pgnz.org.nz, 04 802 8214).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Rickman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nicole Rickman
General Manager – Membership and Professional Services