

15 February 2024

PHARMAC  
PO Box 10254  
The Terrace  
Wellington 6143

Sent via email to: [vaccines@pharmac.govt.nz](mailto:vaccines@pharmac.govt.nz)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Update on the joint proposal from Pharmac and Te Whatu Ora to enable many childhood vaccinations to be given in pharmacies – further feedback required**

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 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 feedback on this consultation focuses on Guild members' concerns around general economic, funding and supply issues.

We would like to express our strong support for the proposal to enable pharmacists to provide and claim reimbursement for paracetamol oral liquid for children under two years of age being vaccinated with the meningococcal B vaccine, Bexsero.

We believe that this initiative is an essential part of expanding the administration and funding of certain childhood vaccines by fully authorised vaccinators in community pharmacies with the aim of increasing vaccination rates in tamariki and would recognise the importance of establishing a mechanism that allows pharmacists to provide paracetamol oral liquid in specific circumstances that aligns with responsible healthcare practice and current guidelines.

It is noteworthy that other vaccinators are already permitted to obtain paracetamol oral liquid on a Bulk Supply Order (BSO) for the same purpose. A mechanism to include pharmacists to be able to provide, and be funded to provide, paracetamol oral liquid for children under two years of age being vaccinated with the meningococcal B vaccine is an essential alignment step with the principles of accessibility, efficiency, and collaboration across healthcare providers.

We fully support this proposal for several reasons:

- **Pharmacist qualifications and competence:** Pharmacists possess the necessary qualifications and competence to provide safe access to funded paracetamol at accurately calculated dosages for specific patients. Their extensive training and expertise in medicines make them well-suited for this responsibility.

- **Trusted healthcare professionals:** Pharmacists are trusted healthcare professionals who have a long-standing history of ensuring responsible use and distribution of medicines and educating the public on the safe use of medicines. Granting them the ability to provide funded paracetamol oral liquid aligns with the confidence the public places in pharmacists.
- **Expert guidance on medicines:** Pharmacists routinely offer expert advice and guidance to patients and caregivers on the safe and effective use of paracetamol and other medicines. This proposal represents a logical and practical extension of their existing abilities and competencies as medicine experts.
- **Removing follow up vaccine hesitancy:** Permitting pharmacists to provide funded paracetamol oral liquid to children receiving the Bexsero vaccine will allow for a better experience for the child and caregiver by offering pain and fever reduction for the patient, which may in turn reduce the potential of follow up vaccine hesitancy for future doses of this and other vaccines.
- **Advanced record keeping systems:** Pharmacists have superior record-keeping abilities due to the software solutions they use daily. The provision of funded paracetamol oral liquid can be accurately tracked for audit and data processing, as well as on national health networks, as opposed to other vaccinating healthcare providers who may be supplying paracetamol oral liquid via a blanket BSO and manual recording systems.
- **Increase access and opportunities for whanau:** Allowing whanau to choose where and when they feel comfortable and find convenient for tamariki to receive their vaccinations, with the large geographical footprint of community pharmacies, will positively impact vaccination rates and outcomes throughout the motu.

Thank you for your consideration of our response. If you have any questions about our feedback, please contact our Senior Advisory Pharmacists, Martin Lowis ([martin@pgnz.org.nz](mailto:martin@pgnz.org.nz), 04 802 8218) or Cathy Martin ([cathy@pgnz.org.nz](mailto:cathy@pgnz.org.nz), 04 802 8214).

Yours sincerely,



**Nicole Rickman**

General Manager – Membership and Professional Services