

26 July 2024

PHARMAC
PO Box 10254
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposal to widen access to immunotherapy for six types of cancer, and treatments to prevent fungal infections

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 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 would like to commend Pharmac for the proposal to widen access to critical immunotherapy treatments and antifungal medicines, as outlined in the recent funding announcements. While community pharmacies may not be directly involved in dispensing the proposed immunotherapy treatments for cancers, we recognise the significant impact these treatments will have on the lives of our patients and their families.

In addition, the proposed widening of access to posaconazole and voriconazole for the prevention of invasive fungal infections in severely immunocompromised individuals is a crucial step in improving patient outcomes, and will result in fewer admissions to hospital for IV administration of antifungals and prevention of serious infections.

As always, the community pharmacy sector stands ready to support patients in managing potential side effects and after-effects of cancer treatments, particularly through the provision of preventative antifungal medicines. We believe that the proposed amendments to the criteria to posaconazole and voriconazole, including the simplified eligibility for antifungal prophylaxis, will significantly benefit patients undergoing treatments that compromise their immune system.

However, due to the high cost of these medicines and that they will not be used regularly by the public, we ask that Pharmac allow community pharmacy to claim wastage for any leftover quantities after fulfilling a prescription or alternatively be authorised to dispense as an original full pack.

If you have any questions about our response, please contact our Senior Advisory Pharmacists, Martin Lowis (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 'N. Rickman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Nicole Rickman

General Manager – Membership and Professional Services