



Submission to PHARMAC: Proposals for influenza vaccine

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Submission to:

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This submission was completed by:

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2. Background

PHARMAC is seeking feedback on a proposal to list two brands of influenza vaccine in the Pharmaceutical Schedule for the 2014, 2015 and 2016 influenza seasons. The proposal outlines details regarding provisional agreements entered into with two pharmaceutical companies; eligibility for, and administration of, the vaccine; and distribution and promotional activities.

The College of Nurses (Aotearoa) is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on this proposal, as a professional body of New Zealand registered nurses and nurse practitioners from all regions and specialties both within and outside of the District Health Board (DHB) setting. It provides a voice for the nursing profession and professional commentary on issues that affect nurses, and also the health of the whole community, aiming for excellence in nursing practice and health care delivery which addresses disparities in health

Overall, the College of Nurses (Aotearoa) is supportive of the inclusion of the described influenza vaccines on the Pharmaceutical Schedule for the 2014, 2015 and 2016 influenza seasons as an important preventive measure to protect the health of New Zealanders against the effect of influenza, particularly our vulnerable populations. However, the College would like to provide comment on one aspect of PHARMAC's proposal, which the College considers requires further consideration and amendment.

3. Submission

The proposal outlines the eligibility criteria for access to the vaccines. The College draws your attention to clause B of this criteria (page 3 of the proposal document) which states the following:

"Doctors are the only Contractors entitled to claim payment from the Funder for the supply of influenza vaccine to patients eligible under the above criteria for subsidized immunization and they may only do so in respect of the influenza vaccine listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule."

The College of Nurses (Aotearoa) considers that this clause requires amendment to enable all clinicians who are authorised to provide the service to claim payment from the Funder for the supply of the influenza vaccine to patients who are eligible under the criteria for subsidised immunisation. At present, the wording of clause B imposes contracting conditions which limits patient access to the vaccine. Increasingly health professionals such as nurse practitioners and authorised vaccinators are becoming a first point of contact for patients in primary health care services, and these health professionals are able to claim payment. The College of Nurses (Aotearoa) would not want patients seeing health professionals other than doctors to have their access to the influenza vaccine limited.

We would encourage PHARMAC to revise clause B in order to provide an enabling environment for these professionals to ensure wide access for patients and to bring requirements in line with the model used for ACC and GMS claims.