

24 May 2013

Murray Lord
CEO
MedicAlert[®] Foundation - New Zealand Incorporated
PO Box 40028
Upper Hutt 5140

National Health & Safety Protocols for MedicAlert[®] Consultation

Dear Murray

Thank you for inviting the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) to provide comment on the draft National Health & Safety Protocols for MedicAlert[®], Version 2.5.

The NZMA is the country's foremost voluntary pan-professional medical organisation with over 5,000 members. Our members come from all disciplines within the medical profession and include specialists, general practitioners, doctors-in-training and medical students. The NZMA aims to provide leadership of the medical profession, and promote professional unity and values, and the health of New Zealanders.

We note that the stated purpose of the draft consultation document is to enable all healthcare and emergency service providers, and their employers, to implement protocols for MedicAlert[®]'s service that reflect the legal, ethical and operational obligations of the provider to act in the best interests of patients' health, welfare, safety and rights. We also note that the consultation document is intended to support policies, systems and procedures that ensure a MedicAlert[®] identification is located immediately an incident occurs and is correctly utilised in the best interests of patients to prevent avoidable harm.

The NZMA welcomes measures to facilitate timely access to accurate health information in an emergency. In general, we are satisfied with the protocols specified in the draft consultation document. We also note that the document appears to give due consideration to relevant legislative obligations including privacy. However, the NZMA has some concerns with the strength of the wording relating to the obligations and recommendations for employers and health providers. Given that MedicAlert[®] is an independent entity, we believe that wording such as

“employers should” provide training on identification and access is inappropriately strong. We suggest that such language be modulated to “it would be desirable for employers” to provide training on identification and access, or similar such phrasing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this draft. While the NZMA acknowledges the potential benefits of the MedicAlert[®] systems, our comments should not be implied in any way as an endorsement or approval of MedicAlert[®] or the National Health and Safety protocols that are being proposed. We would also kindly request that no part of our letter be reproduced for promotional purposes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Peterson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Mark Peterson
NZMA Chair