

31 July 2017

Sean Dougherty
Manager, Schedule Strategy and Development
PHARMAC
PO Box 10-254
Wellington 6143
By email: belinda.ray-johnson@pharmac.govt.nz

Changes to the presentation of the Pharmaceutical Schedule

Dear Sean

Thank you for apprising the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) of work PHARMAC is currently undertaking to make the Pharmaceutical Schedule rules easier to find, use and apply. We note that the aim of this work is not to rewrite the rules or change their intention, but to consolidate and restructure the various rules that exist across the Schedule by having them in one place to provide consistency. We also note that part of this work entails developing a Schedule Guide as a user manual. We understand that, while PHARMAC will be seeking input from stakeholders through formal consultation as this work progresses, feedback is being sought at any time.

The NZMA congratulates PHARMAC on this initiative. We welcome the intent to have the Schedule rules in one place to provide consistency as well as the development of a user manual. We note that the Schedule is currently available electronically¹ (either as a searchable online database or as a PDF) as well as hard copy. We suggest that this initiative be applied to all formats, including hard copy. While electronic formats are useful, many users still prefer hard copies. With respect to the online searchable database, we suggest that it would be useful to have 'pop-up' information boxes with the rules that apply for each medicine. This format of the schedule already provides 'click through' to data sheets and Special Authority forms.

To help in this work, we understand that PHARMAC has established a small working group of PHARMAC staff and various professionals from across the health sector. We hope that this group includes prescribers from primary as well as tertiary care services.

We hope that our initial feedback has been helpful and look forward to providing further input as this work is progressed.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kate Baddock
NZMA Chair

¹ Available from <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/tools-resources/pharmaceutical-schedule/>