

THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF PHARMACEUTICALS

Presenter: Rachel MacKay

Abstract

PHARMAC, the Pharmaceutical Management Agency, is a Crown entity established by the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, directly accountable to the Minister of Health. It is internationally recognised for its innovation and success in the area of pharmaceutical subsidy management. This year, PHARMAC has a budget of around \$565 million of taxpayers' money subsidising pharmaceuticals for New Zealanders for use in the community. PHARMAC has successfully met the targets laid down for it by various Governments since 1993, with an average 3% growth in pharmaceutical spending, largely in line with increases in total health care spending over that period.

PHARMAC's overall objective is *'to secure for eligible people in need of pharmaceuticals, the best health outcomes that are reasonably achievable from pharmaceutical treatment and from within the amount of funding provided'*.

PHARMAC has several legislative functions, one of which is *'to promote the responsible use of pharmaceuticals'*.

PHARMAC achieves this through initiatives undertaken by the Demand Side team. The team works with the MoH, DHBs, NZGG, health professionals, representative bodies, patient groups and the public to inform and educate about the responsible use of pharmaceuticals. PHARMAC contracts with external agencies: BPAC NZ to promote services to health professionals and SPARC for the Green Prescription programme.

PHARMAC and NZGG have worked together on the development, implementation and promotion of several guidelines:

- PHARMAC assisted with the printing and distribution of the 'Hormone Replacement Therapy or HRT: New Information for Women'
- PHARMAC funded the write up of the 'Management of Dyspepsia & Heartburn' guideline;
- the 'Diagnosis and Treatment of Adult Asthma' guidelines formed the basis of PHARMAC's Asthma Management campaign; and
- PHARMAC's 'One Heart Many Lives' cardiovascular risk awareness campaign is based on the 'Assessment and Management of Cardiovascular Risk' guideline.

The presentation will briefly outline how PHARMAC uses Demand Side tools to implement guidelines, with a particular focus on the Asthma Management campaign.