

From: Rachel Read  
Sent: Thursday, 16 April 2020 5:58 pm  
To: Amber Coyle <s9(2)(a)>; Adam Bennet <s9(2)(a)>  
Cc: Peter.Jane <s9(2)(a)>; Lizzy Cohen <s9(2)(a)>  
Subject: No Surprises - Special Authorities automatically extended

Hi Amber

This is a 'no surprises' update for the Minister

**All Special Authorities that were due to expire on 31 March or 30 April have been extended for 3 months**

PHARMAC is making changes to ensure people can continue to receive the medicines they need during New Zealand's response to COVID-19.

Many health care professionals have asked us to automatically extend all Special Authorities, which set out specific criteria that must be met for funding of some medicines. Generally, there are more than 10,000 Special Authorities that expire each month.

All Special Authorities that were due to expire on 31 March or 30 April have now been extended for 3 months (i.e. 31 March extended to 30 June and 30 April extended to 31 July).

This change was implemented on Wednesday 15 April by the Ministry of Health which updated its Electronic Special Authority System. This update made it possible for a blanket extension to over 30,000 Special Authorities.

This will be welcomed by prescribers, because prescribers working remotely during lockdown have been finding it difficult to access the Ministry's Electronic Special Authority System.

We'll ensure that medical practitioners and pharmacies are informed of this change, however prescribers and pharmacists do not need to take any specific actions in response to this.

PHARMAC had, from last month, already made changes to many Special Authority access criteria, including removing requirements for specialist input or specific testing to renew funding approvals for some medicines. This means Special Authority renewal applications can be made for these medicines by any practitioner, without the need for specialist referrals and diagnostic tests.

PHARMAC, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, will continue to monitor the situation and, if necessary, may implement further changes or extensions to Special Authorities.

If you require further information about Special Authorities, please let me know.

Regards Rachel

Rachel Read | Manager, Policy and Government Services | Engagement & Implementation

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**From:** Jane Wright  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 21 April 2020 5:55 PM  
**To:** Amber Coyle <s9(2)(a)>; Julian Robins  
<s9(2)(a)>; Adam Bennet <s9(2)(a)>  
<s9(2)(a)>  
**Cc:** Lizzy Cohen <s9(2)(a)>  
**Subject:** No Surprises - Propofol supply

Hi Amber,

This is a 'no surprises' update for the Minister.

### **Propofol supply**

PHARMAC's medical director Dr Ken Clark will be sending a memo to the professional bodies for intensivists, anaesthetists and other health professionals tomorrow (Wednesday 22 April) to let them know that:

- Propofol is subject to significant supply constraints, both locally and internationally
- With the anticipated changes as New Zealand moves down alert levels, including an increase in elective procedures, we consider it likely that propofol demand will increase, and
- PHARMAC has received clinical advice that practice changes may be possible, which would help conserve available propofol stock without affecting patient outcomes.

PHARMAC is requesting that specialist groups communicate this challenge to their networks and suggests that they provide guidance to their networks regarding clinically appropriate methods to conserve propofol stock.

Propofol is used in DHB hospitals to start and maintain general anaesthesia, as sedation for mechanically ventilated adults, and for surgical and other procedures.

PHARMAC has secured some additional propofol stock which should arrive in New Zealand in May 2020. We are actively working with the contracted supplier of propofol, as well as other suppliers, to ensure we continue receiving stock of this vital medicine.

If you require further information about this please let me know.

*kind regards*

*Jane Wright | senior communications advisor (media)*

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