

Weekly media and issues update

For the week ending: 20 March 2020

PHARMAC Senior Leadership Team	PHARMAC Communications Team
Minister of Health Press Secretaries	Minister of Health Private Secretary
Ministry of Health Deputy Director General System Strategy and Policy	Ministry of Health Manager System Stewardship
Ministry of Health Relationship Manager	Ministry of Health Media Team

This update may contain personal or sensitive information that must not be disclosed or forwarded to anyone other than the recipients listed above.

On call communications advisor

Senior communications advisor Jane Wright is on call. The on-call media phone number is 021 863 342.

Communications team

- Jannel Fisher, communications manager – s9(2)(a)
- Jane Wright, senior communications advisor – s9(2)(a)
- Cameron Webb, communications advisor – s9(2)(a)

IN CONFIDENCE - Official Information Act
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Upcoming issues and events

Subject	Timeframe	Details
COVID-19 and supply issues	<i>Ongoing</i>	PHARMAC has contacted all contracted medicine and device suppliers to seek information about any potential impacts to supply and their contingency plans. The majority have responded to confirm that they have contingency plans in place and are actively managing their supply chains as best they can. Some suppliers have advised us that they anticipate future disruptions due to supply, whether due to manufacturing or transportation. We are working closely with them to determine the best approach to manage potential shortages. There are supply issues with paracetamol and PHARMAC placed temporary dispensing limits on Government-funded paracetamol from Monday 9 March 2020.

Out of Scope

Media responses

Subject	Media outlet	Details
COVID 19 and the pharmaceutical	RNZ	Lisa did an interview on Checkpoint on our supply chain and how PHARMAC is working with our suppliers to ensure continuity of supply where possible.

supply chain	TVNZ	We have been asked by numerous journalists at TVNZ for updated information on any pharmaceutical supply issues. Have provided them with our key messages and reassured them that our website will be updated when and if there are any further supply issues.
	Stuff	We have been asked by numerous journalists at Stuff (Dom Post, Timaru Herald) about updated information on any pharmaceutical supply issues.
	Sunday Star Times	Sunday Star Times are writing an article this weekend on the affect COVID-19 will be having on those with mental health issues. Were asked to confirm the numbers of New Zealanders taking anti-depressant medicine.
Influenza	RNZ	We have provided confirmation of the number of flu vaccines NZ has ordered and the process that is used to decide the number of doses needed.
Ventilators	Dominion Post	We were asked if we managed the supply of critical care ventilators, which we don't. Referred her to the MoH.
Pneumonia vaccines	RNZ	Provided the eligibility criteria and the stock we have in the country for pneumonia vaccines.

Official Information Act responses sent or received this week

Requestor	Request	Date
Out of Scope		
s9(2)(a), Newshub	All correspondence regarding PHARMAC's potential responses and	Sent 18 March

		planning around coronavirus	
s9(2)(a)		Source of pharmaceuticals	Sent 17 March 2020
s9(2)(a)		PHARMAC's coronavirus preparedness	Sent 16 March
Out of Scope			
s9(2)(a)	OECD	OECD study on medicine supply shortages	Sent 17 March

Ministerial responses sent this week

Request	Requester	Response
nil		

Written Parliamentary Question responses sent this week

Requestor	Request	Response
Hon Michael Woodhouse	3851 (2020). Hon Michael Woodhouse to the Minister of Health (11 Mar 2020): What monitoring, if any, of medicine stockpiles is being done and how regularly is this being done, if at all?	Pharmaceutical suppliers under PHARMAC contracts are required to keep a minimum stock in New Zealand equal to two months' demand. There is typically another four to six weeks' worth of stock across the wholesale and retail supply chain. Some medicines (for example some oral antibiotics) have a greater minimum stock holding requirement, such as four months. PHARMAC manages its relationship with contracted suppliers to ensure they are meeting their minimum stock holding obligations and to enable management of any emerging supply issues.

		<p>Other than some funded vaccines, PHARMAC itself does not purchase or hold stocks of any medicine. Monitoring of medicine stocks, once purchased by community pharmacies and DHBs, is generally the responsibility of those individual entities. However, the Ministry of Health's National Health Coordination Centre has recently been engaging with DHBs to determine national stock levels of essential medicines held by DHBs.</p>
Alastair Scott	<p>4258 (2020). Alastair Scott to the Minister of Health (16 Mar 2020): How many, if any, AFLURIA QUAD and AFLURIA QUAD JUNIOR vaccines have been secured for the New Zealand population for the 2020 influenza season?</p>	<p>PHARMAC reports that the supplier of Afluria has committed to supply 1.44 million doses of Afluria Quad and 20,000 doses of Afluria Quad Junior to New Zealand for the 2020 influenza season. These vaccines will be distributed for publicly funded vaccinations of eligible patients, and will also be available for privately funded vaccinations.</p> <p>PHARMAC advises that an additional 300,000 influenza vaccines have been sourced from an alternative supplier, which means the total number of influenza vaccines available for the New Zealand market is 1.76 million doses.</p>

No surprises and communications updates sent to Ministers Office this week

Date	Information supplied
Out of Scope	