

**MONTHLY REPORT FOR MARCH 2020**

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Date** 4 March 2020

**Attention** Hon Dr David Clark  
Minister of Health

**Copies to:**

PHARMAC Board  
Lead DHB CE, Pharmaceuticals  
Director-General of Health Ministry of Health  
Manager Governance and Crown Entities Ministry of Health  
Senior Advisor, Governance and Crown Entities Ministry of Health

**Contact(s)**

Sarah Fitt, Chief Executive  
Alison Hill, Director Engagement and Implementation

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## Update on key activities and transactions

### COVID-19 Response

PHARMAC has proactively engaged with the Ministry of Health on their response to the current COVID 19 outbreak in China and preparation for a potential outbreak in New Zealand.

PHARMAC has contacted all contracted medicine and device suppliers and asked for status updates on any current or predicted impact to their supply chains. PHARMAC staff have also checked with suppliers of Additional Stock Pharmaceuticals (ASPs) identified by the Anti Infective subcommittee in 2009 as being likely to be required for secondary infections. Suppliers of ASPs are required to hold a minimum of four months stock in New Zealand. Currently there are no concerns with supply of the ASP antibiotics identified.

There is the potential that media interest in COVID 19 could drive increased demand for the seasonal influenza vaccine. Additional influenza vaccine uptake would also have the benefit of potentially decreasing demand on primary and secondary care during any COVID-19 response. PHARMAC has engaged with influenza vaccine suppliers, Seqirus (the contracted supplier for 2020) and Mylan (the only other supplier updating their strains for Medsafe registration in 2020) to bring additional doses into New Zealand. There are 1.768 million doses due for delivery to New Zealand. (1.468 from Seqirus and 300,000 from Mylan).

A total of 1.37 million doses were used in the 2019 influenza season, including publicly and privately funded vaccines.

#### Influenza vaccines distributed:

Year	Total vaccines distributed (private and funded)	Total funded vaccines in the community
2013	1,250,000	718,000
2014	1,210,000	687,000
2015	1,211,000	668,000
2016	1,244,000	673,000
2017	1,216,000	663,000
2018	1,320,000	678,000
2019	1,370,000	701,000

Balance of Report is Out of Scope

**MONTHLY REPORT FOR MARCH 2020**

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Date** 1 April 2020

**Attention** Hon Dr David Clark  
Minister of Health

**Copies to:**

PHARMAC Board  
Lead DHB CE, Pharmaceuticals  
Director-General of Health Ministry of Health  
Manager Governance and Crown Entities Ministry of Health  
Senior Advisor, Governance and Crown Entities Ministry of Health

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## Key Items

### COVID-19 Response and medicines management

#### *Medicines and Device supply management*

PHARMAC has put in place Pharmaceutical Schedule rule changes that will restrict the dispensing of funded community medicines to just one month's supply at a time.

From Friday 27 March 2020 community pharmacists are required to limit dispensing of all funded medicines to one month's supply (or three months for oral contraceptives). This was in response to stockpiling of medicines.

PHARMAC continues to maintain regular contact with all contracted medicine and device suppliers, requesting status updates on any current or predicted impact to their supply chains. Most suppliers have indicated they have contingency plans which will maintain continuity of supply. Approximately 50 suppliers indicated they will potentially have an issue with supply in the coming weeks or months.

#### *Changes to Schedule criteria and rules*

We have also amended some Special Authority criteria to make it easier for people to have continuing access to funded treatments while New Zealand is responding to COVID 19. We issued a media release about this on 31 March 2020.

The Retail Pharmacy Specialist Restriction, which requires a specialist to provide a (new) recommendation within two years, for certain pharmaceuticals to be subsidised, will also be removed from 1 April 2020.

PHARMAC has heard from clinicians that getting specialist recommendations and some laboratory tests will be very difficult while responding to COVID-19. Removing these barriers will help people to continue to get the funded medicines they need, such as some cancer treatments and cardiovascular treatments.

The Pharmaceutical Schedule will be updated to reflect these changes. PHARMAC intends to change the criteria back to the original requirements once health services have stabilised to a point where it becomes practical to reinstate them.

We are continuing to monitor the situation and may make further adjustments to the Pharmaceutical Schedule Rules as required.

## Influenza vaccine supply

We expect that interest in COVID 19 could drive increased demand for the seasonal influenza vaccine. Additional influenza vaccine uptake would also have the benefit of potentially decreasing demand on primary and secondary care during any COVID 19 response.

PHARMAC staff have secured supply for:

- 1.448 million doses of Afluria Quad;
- 20,000 doses of Afluria Quad Junior;
- an additional 300,000 doses of vaccine from Mylan (the only other supplier that has been able to allocate product to New Zealand for 2020)

In total, this will allow for **1.768 million doses to be available in the 2020 season**, a 30% (400,000 doses) increase on 2019 distribution

PHARMAC staff continue to pursue all possible options for additional influenza vaccine stock; at the time of writing suppliers have indicated that no additional vaccine stock is available for New Zealand. Vaccines for use in New Zealand are manufactured specifically for the Southern Hemisphere market to protect against the dominant influenza strains expected to circulate here.

### *Influenza vaccine stock movements*

- 772,850 vaccine doses have been distributed up to 30 March 2020. Further distribution of the 121,150 doses remaining in stock is being carefully managed to prioritise those most at risk
- 20,000 doses of Afluria Quad Junior have arrived in New Zealand, distribution is to begin 6 April
- Further stock is expected to arrive in New Zealand soon: 6 April (300,000 doses), late April (230,000 doses), May (remainder)
- Manufacturing locations: Melbourne (1.468 million doses) Netherlands (300,000 doses).
- Logistics: priority air freight capacity is being secured to ensure no delays

We are keeping the Ministry of Health updated on vaccine availability to support their planning for the 2020 influenza vaccination programme

Out of Scope

Pages 4-5 of Report are Out of Scope

## Recent briefings

- Briefing COVID 19 update on PHARMACs planning for supply chain management – 30 March 2020

Out of Scope

- No surprises Fluoxetine 30 March 2020
- No surprises restriction on supply of hydroxychloroquine 24 March 2020
- No surprises – influenza vaccines supply – 24 March 2020

Out of Scope

Out of Scope

Out of Scope

Out of Scope

- No surprises managing medicines supply (paracetamol) 4 March 2020

Out of Scope

Out of Scope

*Sarah Fitt*

Sarah Fitt  
Chief Executive