

## Interferon beta, PHARMAC and political directives – PHARMAC clarifies

Regarding the Multiple Sclerosis Society of New Zealand's response (<http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/119-1235/2018/>) to the 'special series' article on the funding of beta-interferon by Dr Harry McNaughton and colleagues (<http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/119-1232/1939/>), we wish to clarify two points:

1. PHARMAC was directed to fund beta-interferon by the Minister of Health.<sup>1</sup> PHARMAC could therefore neither account for nor ignore cost-effectiveness and other issues under its decision criteria.
2. Information on the cost-effectiveness of beta-interferon for multiple sclerosis in the New Zealand setting was used in PHARMAC's decisions<sup>2 3</sup>, and is available to District Health Board staff on the HPAD website at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/hpad/assessments/TAR15.doc><sup>4</sup>

Scott Metcalfe

Externally contracted public health physician

Peter Moodie

Medical Director

PHARMAC

## References/Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand Gazette 52:117, Wellington: Thursday, 18 May 2000. page 1144.

[http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/NZGZT/NZGazette52May00.pdf/\\$file/NZGazette52May00.pdf](http://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/NZGZT/NZGazette52May00.pdf/$file/NZGazette52May00.pdf)

### Ministerial Direction Under Section 25 of the Health and Disability Services Act 1993

Following consultation with the Health Funding Authority over the period 4 April 2000 to 5 May 2000, I, Annette King, direct the Health Funding Authority, under section 25 of the Health and Disability Services Act 1993, to fund beta-interferon for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. Access to beta-interferon will be provided on the basis of the entry and stopping criteria, budgetary arrangements, and other conditions agreed from time to time in writing between the Minister of Health and the Health Funding Authority. I consequently revoke my earlier direction, under section 25, relating to beta-interferon, dated the 17th December 1999.

Dated at Wellington this 5th day of May 2000.

ANNETTE KING, Minister of Health.

<sup>2</sup> Technology Assessment Report No. 13. Beta-interferon for Multiple Sclerosis. Indicative Cost-Utility Analysis, PHARMAC, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Technology Assessment Report No. 15. Beta-interferon for Multiple Sclerosis. Detailed Cost-Utility Analysis, PHARMAC, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> where the 2002 analysis (TAR 15) posted on the HPAC website includes as an appendix the 1999 analysis (TAR 13).