

Mō te tūranga | Position description

Position title: Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) Member

Reports to: PTAC Chair

Te pūtake o te tūranga | Purpose of the position

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) is a statutory advisory committee established by the Pharmac Board. Members of PTAC are appointed by the Director-General of Health in consultation with the Pharmac Board.

PTAC is comprised of senior health practitioners with expertise in general evidence assessment/critical appraisal and with experience in clinical fields including, but not limited to, clinical pharmacology, internal medicine, general practice, clinical pharmacy (“PTAC Members”). PTAC may also have one or more members who is a consumer (“PTAC Consumer Members”), to provide a consumer perspective to PTAC discussions.

The primary purpose of PTAC is to provide Pharmac with objective advice on community and hospital pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceuticals in this context include medicines, medical devices and related things, consistent with the enabling legislation for Pharmac.

PTAC is complemented by a number of Specialist Advisory Committees, which provide advice on pharmaceuticals within a specific therapy area. Specialist Advisory Committees are chaired by PTAC Members, and each PTAC Member will sit on or chair two to three Specialist Advisory Committees.

PTAC Members are usually appointed for a term of three years. Members can be considered for reappointment for up to three terms, with a total period of service of nine years.

More details of the roles of PTAC and Specialist Advisory Committees can be found in the [PTAC Terms of Reference](#) and the [Specialist Advisory Committee Terms of Reference](#) (2021). All Members are expected to be familiar with these documents.

Te Pātaka Whaioranga | Pharmac

Pharmac’s legislative 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’s purpose is to deliver the best health outcomes from New Zealand’s investment in medicines and medical devices. As a Crown Agency, Pharmac upholds [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](#), advancing Māori health and aspirations, tino rangatiratanga, partnership, equity, active protection and options.

Pharmac’s decision-making framework – the Factors for Consideration

The Factors for Consideration are the framework Pharmac uses when making funding decisions. The four main areas are outlined below.

- Health Need - considering the impact of the disease, condition or illness on the person, their family or whānau (including the impact on Māori health outcomes and the impact on the health outcomes of population groups experiencing health disparities), wider society, and the broader New Zealand health system
- Health Benefit - the potential health gain (or loss) from the medicine or medical device being considered
- Costs and savings - the health-related costs and savings to the person and their family, whānau and to wider society, and the costs and savings to pharmaceutical budget and the wider health system
- Suitability - the non-clinical features of the medicine or medical device that might impact on health outcomes

For further information on the Factors for Consideration go to:

<https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/medicines/how-medicines-are-funded/factors-for-consideration>

How PTAC supports Pharmac to achieve its objective

PTAC Members:

- provide objective advice to Pharmac on pharmaceuticals for use in the community and hospitals
- make recommendations to the Pharmac Board on the funding of pharmaceuticals based on Pharmac's Factors for Consideration decision-making framework (see above)
- initiate, subject to the prior agreement of Pharmac, reviews of any policy adopted by Pharmac in relation to the management of the Pharmaceutical Schedule, and provide reports or make recommendations to Pharmac arising from those reviews
- consider, report, or make recommendations, to Pharmac on any other matters that may be referred to it by Pharmac

PTAC Members also chair and support the Specialist Advisory Committees, which provide advice on community and hospital pharmaceuticals.

In their advisory role to the Crown, all PTAC Members are expected to ensure that their advice reflects the Crown's obligations and expectations under te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Ngā tino mahi o te tūranga | Key position requirements

PTAC meetings are held in Wellington¹ at least four times a year. Meetings are 1.5–2 days long and usually require at least 30–40 hours of preparation time.

PTAC Members are expected, prior to each PTAC meeting, to have:

- critically appraised all papers and information provided in the applications being considered by the Committee at the meeting
- analysed the subjects under consideration, forming an initial professional view for discussion at the meeting of the strengths and weaknesses of the applications.
- when requested, develop a presentation for the committee considering a paper or topic as the discussion lead

All Members are required to provide their view on each pharmaceutical under consideration at the meeting based on the available scientific evidence, or expert opinion in the absence of scientific evidence. They are required to be prepared to discuss issues related to these subjects with other members in a professional and constructive manner. PTAC is expected to reach a consensus on a recommendation to Pharmac for each application reviewed.

¹ COVID restrictions may result in a meeting being undertaken by electronic means

Following the meeting all PTAC Members are expected to contribute to the finalisation of the meeting record in a timely manner.

PTAC Members are also expected to sit on and/or chair two to three Specialist Advisory Committees. Specialist Advisory Committees meet approximately once every 12 to 18 months, or more frequently if necessary.

Pharmac also hosts workshops, usually annually, which all Members are expected to attend.

PTAC Members work with the PTAC Chair, other Members, the PTAC Secretary, and Pharmac's Chief Medical Officer. They also engage with other Pharmac staff as required and work closely with Specialist Advisory Committee Members.

PTAC Members must conduct themselves in accordance with the PTAC [Terms of Reference](#) at all times.

Ngā pūkenga e hiahiatia ana | Ideal person specification

PTAC Members should be registered with their relevant professional body, preferably be in active clinical practice, and should ideally have:

- excellent evidence assessment/critical appraisal skills
- good general knowledge of pharmaceuticals
- at least five years' experience in their vocational field
- a good understanding of evidence-based medicine in clinical practice.
- understanding of the health sector within Aotearoa New Zealand
- knowledge of the diversity of health need and access to treatment within Aotearoa New Zealand
- understanding of, and commitment to achieving, health and medicines access equity
- an understanding of te Tiriti o Waitangi and a commitment to applying it in carrying out their duties
- the ability to differentiate between an individual and population health perspective on issues
- good presentation skills
- an understanding of the trade-offs required when working to a fixed budget
- the ability to work constructively in a group and accept consensus decision-making.

Members are not appointed as representatives of their primary employer or any other organisation.

The Director General of Health and Pharmac are committed to ensuring that decisions on pharmaceuticals meet the needs of all New Zealanders. A diverse and inclusive PTAC allows Pharmac to understand and best serve Aotearoa New Zealand and make better and more equitable decisions. We value diversity and inclusion and welcome applicants with the aforementioned skills of all gender identities, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, disability and religions.

Pharmac is a pro-equity organisation, with a particular focus on health outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples.

This position description sets out the key requirements of the position. Specific duties within the scope of this role may change in response to the environment that Pharmac operates within.

Position description last updated: July 2022