



More from PHARMAC on temozolomide: feedback needed

Further to PHARMAC's response in the *Journal* on temozolomide and funding costly medicines (<http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/118-1227/1806/>), PHARMAC and Schering-Plough have reached a provisional agreement for funding of temozolomide (Temodal). PHARMAC is now seeking consultation feedback from the sector and interested parties.

The agreement, which is subject to a two-week consultation period and PHARMAC Board approval, would see temozolomide funded from May 2006 for newly-diagnosed glioblastoma multiforme patients who were undergoing radiotherapy. Funded access would also continue post-radiotherapy, for up to six cycles of treatment.

The provisional agreement reflects the high priority both PHARMAC and Schering-Plough have placed on temozolomide. PHARMAC recognises that this treatment represents an advance on currently available therapies for glioblastomas, and has moved quickly to progress its process for considering temozolomide.

Contrary to some reports in the print news media (by-lined 'PHARMAC says it will pay for six cycles of Temodal for newly diagnosed patients'), we emphasise that the agreement is provisional and is subject to its being approved by PHARMAC's Board of Directors. We anticipate that the Board will take a decision when it next meets later this month. If accepted by the Board, the proposed changes would take effect from 1 May 2006.

PHARMAC is inviting feedback from the sector on the proposal—as it does with most decisions whether to fund (<http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/pdf/opps.pdf>). The Board considers all feedback when making its decision whether to accept a proposal.

The full consultation document on the PHARMAC website at <http://www.pharmac.govt.nz/pdf/060306.pdf> details the proposal and how to submit responses.

As stated there, the deadline for responses is **5:00 pm Thursday 16 March 2006**.

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Conflicts of interest: Dilky Rasiah declares no conflicts.