PHARMAC
Pharmaceutical Management Agency

Level 9, 40 Mercer Street, Wellington 6011
PO Box 10-254, Wellington 6143, New Zealand
Phone 64-4-460-4990
Fax 64-4-460-4995
Information line 0800 66 00 50
enquiry@pharmac.govt.nz
www.pharmac.govt.nz

24 July 2015

**Via email:** fyi-request-2879-fd59c0ee@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Soar

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Thank you for your request dated 25 June 2015 under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) for information relating to Sativex. Your request was transferred to PHARMAC from the Ministry of Health under section 14 of the OIA on 26 June 2015. You have asked whether PHARMAC has ever funded a Sativex application prescription, and if PHARMAC has ever funded a prescription of Sativex, how many times has this been done for differing clients.

PHARMAC has not received a funding application for Sativex (cannabidiol with tetrahydrocannabinol) for consideration for a listing on the Pharmaceutical Schedule. However you may be interested to know that PHARMAC will be seeking clinical advice regarding Sativex from the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC), PHARMAC's primary clinical advisory committee, at its August 2015 meeting.

PHARMAC is seeking advice from PTAC about Sativex for the following indications: spasticity due to Multiple Sclerosis, treatment of epilepsy, and pain with or without spasticity. The minutes from this meeting will be published on PHARMAC's website approximately six weeks following the meeting.

Consideration by PTAC is the first step in assessing the funding of a new medicine. PTAC can recommend that a product be listed on the Pharmaceutical Schedule with a high, medium, low, or only if cost neutral priority. PTAC can also recommend that an application is declined or it can defer making a recommendation pending receipt of further information. It should be noted that a positive recommendation from PTAC does not guarantee funding of a medicine; it is just the first step in the process. Following PTAC's review, assuming a positive recommendation is made, PHARMAC will then assess the relative priority of funding the pharmaceutical compared with other funding options available and given the amount of funding available.

Another possible option is for patients to be considered for funding under our Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA) policy. This is PHARMAC's process for considering funding for individual patients who are seeking funding for treatments not listed on the Schedule. Additionally, there are a number of prerequisites which must be met before a NPPA application can be progressed. One of these is that all funded alternatives have been tried.

To date, PHARMAC has received eleven NPPA applications for Sativex for various indications. Nine applications were not progressed for final decisions as the NPPA pre-

requisites were not met or PHARMAC received no further information after writing to the applicant. The other two NPPA applications for Sativex were declined.

We trust that this information answers your queries, if you have any further questions please feel free to contact us again.

Yours sincerely

Jude Urlich
Director of Engagement & Implementation