

20 April 2017

Professor Andrew Wilson
Chair
Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)
Department of Health
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Professor Wilson

Streamlining the authority system for medications commonly prescribed in general practice

I write in reference to the PBAC Review of Authority Required PBS Listings (the Review) conducted in 2015 and more generally to the ongoing interest of general practitioners (GPs) for an easy-to-use authority system, which supports GPs to provide efficient and effective care.

Streamlining of authorisation for high quantities of several topical corticosteroids, as of mid-2016, has been helpful to GPs needing to prescribe repeat prescriptions of these medications. However, as you will know, there are a number of other drugs often prescribed by GPs in quantities – eg selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and some antihypertensives (eg atenolol) – that are still restricted by the authority prescribing system.

The RACGP would like to see further streamlining of PBS authority medications and procedural reforms that reduce red-tape and the administrative burden on already time poor GPs. I understand this was the purpose of the Review, but that it is currently unclear when the Review report will be made public or further streamlining will take place.

GPs are responsible prescribers and, as such, we would like to understand when streamlined authorisation for increasing the quantity of certain medications (after initial authority has been obtained) will be considered or implemented. These medications include, but are not limited to

- antidepressants (including SSRIs and amitriptyline at 50mg strength)
- antihypertensives
- antipsychotics
- anticonvulsants
- antibiotics
- anti-reflux medications
- antiemetics.

The potential productivity gains achieved from further streamlining the authority system from an administrative and clinical care perspective are large. At a minimum, GPs will be able to redirect the



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time savings resulting from these changes to further enhancing patient care and increasing access to services.

In addition, the RACGP seeks PBAC consideration for allowing GPs to prescribe the following medications without the need for referral to another medical specialist:

- acne medication (including isotretinoin, roaccutane)
- dementia medications (including donepezil, galantamine, rivastigmine, memantine)

These medications can be commonly prescribed in general practice; providing safe, efficient access to medications for patients at reduced cost to the health system.

I would be happy to meet with you and discuss these matters further. To arrange a meeting, please contact Sarah Maguire, Office of the President, on 03 8699 0550 or email sarah.maguire@racgp.org.au

Yours sincerely

Dr Bastian Seidel
President