

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

1 October 2024

Rollout of new medicines across New Zealand begins

Today marks the first day a range of new medicines, including cancer medicines, will start to become available in hospitals and health centres across the country.

This is an exciting milestone for the four health agencies tasked with ensuring New Zealanders can readily access new and widened medicines as part of the Government's \$604 million investment in medicines over four years.

Pharmac, Te Aho o Te Kahu | Cancer Control Agency, Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora have been working at pace to offer these new, life-changing medicines to 175,000 New Zealanders.

Pharmac CEO, Sarah Fitt, acknowledged the fast work of her team and the invaluable input from health care professionals and the community who have contributed through the consultations to date.

"The work to deliver these additional medicines began in June. We're thrilled to see our team's efforts translate into better lives for people with cancer and a wide range of other diseases and illnesses."

"I am so proud to be part of a team that is committed to improving cancer care for Kiwis," says Rami Rahal, Chief Executive of Te Aho o Te Kahu.

"Improving access to medicines will extend and improve the quality of life for people who have cancer, and I feel privileged to work with passionate, committed people striving to provide timely, high-quality cancer care."

Dr Diana Sarfati, Director-General of Health, says this is an important milestone in the four-year investment made by the Government.

"The health system is pulling together to make sure New Zealanders can access these medicines as quickly as possible.

"This is just the beginning of the roll-out and it will take time for the health system to deliver all the medicines, but they will improve the health and life outcomes for thousands of New Zealanders with a range of health conditions."

In hospitals and health centres across the country, teams have been gearing up to start administering additional medicines to more cancer patients in the public health system, says CEO of Health NZ, Margie Apa.

"I want to acknowledge the incredible people involved in providing care to people with cancer. A massive shout out also to those working behind the scenes to support our frontline teams."

"Additional funding for Health NZ is helping to expand our cancer services and we are working hard to increase capacity so that more people can receive treatment sooner."

Chief Clinical Officer, Richard Sullivan, says Health NZ is advertising for more Medical Oncologists and Pharmacists, and Infusion Nurses will also be needed.

"Over time we want to provide more cancer care in the community and in infusion clinics.

Today's rollout is the result of a collaborative effort across a number of agencies, all committed to improving access to medicines and health outcomes for all New Zealanders.

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