

TE WAIORA



Nelson Marlborough  
**Health**

# **Submission on Pharmac's Proposal to widen access to pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine**

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For more information please contact:

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## Introduction

1. Nelson Marlborough Health (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) (NMH) is a key organisation involved in the health and wellbeing of the people within Te Tau Ihu. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment on Pharmac's proposal to widen access to pertussis vaccine.
2. NMH makes this submission in recognition of its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956.

## General Comments

3. NMH welcomes this consultation to widen access to pertussis vaccine.
4. NMH notes that the *Review of evidence to inform the New Zealand National Immunisation Schedule*<sup>1</sup>, 2018 recommends that "offering [pertussis] vaccination earlier than 28 weeks gestation would provide protection for more infants born preterm. For optimal balance between antibody accumulation and waning too soon, the best timing appears to be around 20-33 weeks gestation. The report recommends that pregnant women should be encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as possible within the recommended window. Therefore NMH supports widening access to the vaccine.
5. NMH recommends that there is a corresponding communication plan to ensure that GP and midwives are aware that the vaccine would be available earlier in pregnancy.
6. NMH recommends that community pharmacy should be included as providers to help ensure access for pregnant women who don't or won't engage with GPs or who need access out of hours.
7. NMH notes that parents of infants in neonatal intensive care are eligible for the vaccine and they would need to attend their GP to receive vaccination. NMH proposes that these parents should be able to receive the vaccination on site at the hospital via an Authorised Independent Vaccinator (AIV). This would make it easier for parents which could lead to higher uptakes of vaccination whereas if the vaccine was only available at GP clinics, this may be seen as a low priority by parents.
8. In addition to this, NMH recommends that parents of infants in neonatal intensive care that have older children with them who may be overdue with their scheduled vaccines be offered vaccinations at the hospital. This would offer more protection for the children and babies in the neo natal ward.

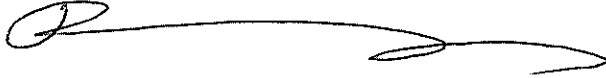
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<sup>1</sup> Immunisation Advisory Centre (2019) Review of evidence to inform the New Zealand National Immunisation Schedule, 2018: Pertussis

## Conclusion

9. NMH thanks Pharmac for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to widen access to pertussis vaccine.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Bramley', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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**Chief Executive**  
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