

**Submission on Pharmac's
Proposal to widen access to
meningococcal ACWY
vaccine for people in close-
living situations**

16 September 2019

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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 meningococcal ACWY vaccine for people in close-living situations.
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 commends Pharmac's proposal to widen access to meningococcal ACWY vaccine for people aged 13 to 25 years in close-living situations.
4. NMH recommends that access to meningococcal b vaccine is also widened as it is the most prevalent strain of meningococcal cases in New Zealand¹.

Table 5. Meningococcal disease cases by group by year, 2016–2019*

Group	Year			
	2016	2017	2018	2019*
B	47	70	51	41
C	8	11	10	5
W	5	12	33	24
Y	7	11	16	8
X	0	0	1	0
E	0	0	0	1
Group unknown ¹	3	5	6	9
Not lab-confirmed	5	3	3	3
Total	75	112	120	91

¹ Includes non-groupable, DNA laboratory-confirmed by PCR and laboratory-confirmed isolates not received by ESR.

*data to 31 August only.

5. Meningococcal disease occurs more commonly for children under 10 therefore NMH recommends that meningococcal vaccines (ACWY and B) are added to the National Immunisation schedule.

¹ https://surv.esr.cri.nz/PDF_surveillance/MeningococcalDisease/2019/Aug2019_MeningoReport.pdf

Table 1. Number of meningococcal disease cases for August 2019 and cumulative number of cases and deaths for 2019* by age group

Age group	August 2019	Cumulative total 2019*	Number of deaths 2019*
<1	5	20	2
1 to 4	3	15	0
5 to 9	1	11	0
10 to 14	0	2	0
15 to 19	1	7	0
20 to 29	2	12	1
30 to 39	0	2	0
40 to 49	0	3	0
50 to 59	0	6	1
60 to 69	1	8	1
70+	1	5	1
Total	14	91	6

*data from January to August 2019.

6. NMH notes that the consultation period was set at two weeks. This timeframe is quite tight for organisations to prepare and authorise submissions. The communicable disease teams in public and primary health units are currently responding to the measles outbreak therefore it would have been advantageous to have a longer consultation period in order to make a more detailed response.

Conclusion

7. NMH thanks Pharmac for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to widen access to widen access to meningococcal ACWY vaccine for people in close-living situations.

Yours sincerely



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