



Department of Health
P.O. Box 5013
Wellington

8 November 1983

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 223

To Medical and Dental Practitioners
(Copy to Proprietors of Retail Pharmacies)

DRUG TARIFF 1981, AMENDMENT NO. 8: EFFECTIVE 1 DECEMBER 1983

This Clinical Services Letter will be the only record most will have of the present changes to the Drug Tariff. As it is not a cumulative list it is suggested that this letter, along with earlier Clinical Services Letters, should be retained for reference purposes.

1. To be available from a retail pharmacy:

Additions

Beclomethasone dipropionate nasal spray (Beconase Aqueous)
Fenoterol hydrobromide as capsules for oral inhalation (Berotec Inhalets)
Glyceryl trinitrate transdermal delivery system 5 mg (Nitradisc 5 mg, Nitroderm TTS5)
Mexiletine hydrochloride long-acting capsules (Mexitil PL)
Naproxen oral liquid (Naprosyn)
Ornidazole injection and oral tablets (Tiberal)
Timolol maleate injection (Blocadren)

The therapeutic value and safety of transdermal delivery systems for glyceryl trinitrate (Nitroderm and Nitradisc) have been recognised by including them in the Drug Tariff to be available from retail pharmacy. However, most patients with angina do not require prophylactic treatment and are best managed with judicious use of sublingual glyceryl trinitrate in association with adequate counselling about physical exercise.

These systems can be most effective in the elderly and those with nocturnal angina but should not be used to mask symptoms of coronary artery disease which could be better treated following a full cardiological work-up. In many cases, particularly post-myocardial infarction, the prophylactic treatment will not need to be continued and the patient can be safely given a trial without the transdermal system provided they have sublingual tablets on hand.

2. To be available from a retail pharmacy on the prescription or recommendation of an appropriate specialist.

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Additions

Aciclovir eye ointment (Zovirax)
Alfacalcidol oral drops (One Alpha)
Megestrol acetate (Megostat)
Ranitidine hydrochloride (Zantac)
Tobramycin eye drops (Tobrex)

Alteration

Sodium valproate (Epilim)

REVIEWS OF THERAPEUTIC GROUPS

From 1 December 1983 tolazoline hydrochloride (Priscol) will be a part-charge under the Drug Tariff. The price for these tablets has risen considerably in recent months so that they are no longer the least expensive in this group of medicines.

Payment from public funds for Efcortelan cream will be based on the cost of a bulk pack of hydrocortisone cream 1 percent from 1 December 1983. If prescribed by brand name it is likely that Efcortelan cream 15 g and 50 g might attract a part-charge to the patient.

The Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee meets in December and it will again review the anti-spasmodic and the diuretic groups of medicines. Any comments you might wish to make will be referred to the Committee.

BUPRENORPHINE HYDROCHLORIDE (TEMGESIC)

In an effort to reduce the abuse of this drug it has been decided that it should be re-scheduled as a Controlled Drug. Amendment No. 7 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 1977 became law on 22 September 1983. This requires that prescriptions for buprenorphine be written on the Practitioners' Controlled Drug Prescription Form, No. H572.

Because of the common practice of illegal alteration of quantities prescribed it is recommended that all prescriptions for controlled drugs state the amount in words as well as figures.

This information was notified in a circular dated 14 September 1983.

DISTRICT ADVISORY PHARMACISTS

Pharmacists attached to district health offices have been re-designated as District Advisory Pharmacists. This change of name from their previous Public Health Pharmacist designation reinforces the greater emphasis being placed on their knowledge of medicines rather than their inspectorial role.

Although they will continue to inspect pharmaceutical wholesalers, registered pharmacies and hospital dispensaries their duties will include monitoring the marketing, the use and the abuse of controlled drugs and scheduled medicines within the health district and advising the medical officer of health about matters pertaining to medicines.

There are 11 pharmacists for the 18 health districts and they can be contacted through the local district health office.

LIST OF SPECIALISTS

The following are recognised as specialists for the purposes of the Drug Tariff and Health Benefits only. These additions cover the period from 23 April to 30 September 1983.

- *Adams, Kenneth William, OPH
- *Astley, Timothy Malcolm, S/OR
- *Atkinson, Christopher Hugh, RAD/T
- *Audeau, Fuad Michael, IM
- *Avery, Stuart Francis, IM
- *Baker, Philip Charles Harris, IM
- *Burgess, Carl David, IM
- *Campbell, David Charles, IM
- *Darlow, Brian Alexander, PAED
- *Dutt, Arunjit, RAD/D
- *Fitzharris, Bernard Michael, IM
- *Garden, Eleanora Johnston, CM
- Gathercole, Jeremy St Clair, S/OTO
- Harrison, Adrian Colin, IM
- Haskell, Richard, PATH
- *Keller, Graham Peter, AN
- Kempthorne, Peter Maurice, AN
- *Low, Wendy Isbell, IM
- Lucas, Peter Robert, IM
- *MacDonald, Iain, AN
- *Malcolm, Laurence Allan, CM
- *Meech, Richard James, VD
- *Miles, Sylvester Wayne, PSYC
- *Miller, Michael Townson, AN
- *Mitchell, Edwin Arthur, PAED
- *Molloy, Patrick John, S/CARD
- *Morrison, Neil David, RAD/D
- *Mukhopadhyay, Arun Ranjan, AN
- *Rea, Harold Halliday, IM
- *Ridley, William John, O/G
- Russo, Leonard Vincent, AN
- *Sugrue, William Joseph, S/GEN
- Tait, John David, O/G
- *Thurston, Alan James, S/OR
- Van Der Wel, Hanne, PSYC

INTENSIFIED ADVERSE DRUG REACTION REPORTING SCHEME

The following medicines are included in the scheme:

- Aciclovir (Zovirax)
- Amiodarone hydrochloride (Cordarone-X)
- Captopril (Capoten)
- Mianserin hydrochloride (Tolvon)
- Nifedipine (Adalat)
- Tocainide hydrochloride (Tonocard)

"EXTENDED SUPPLY" ENDORSEMENTS AND PERIOD OF SUPPLY

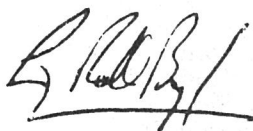
Many will have become aware of planned changes to the Drug Tariff allowing the prescribing of any period up to 3 months' supply of medicines without the necessity for "extended supply" endorsement. These changes were prepared for implementation on 1 December.

Following strong representations to the Minister of Health by pharmacy organisations, implementation has now been postponed until 1 April 1984 to enable the pharmacists' organisations to consider and present further data.

As a result of this decision the requirement for extended supply endorsements will continue as before and monthly dispensing of extended supply prescriptions will continue unless otherwise ordered by the prescriber. The only exemption to this requirement will be in the Dunedin Health District where the Minister has authorised the extension of present arrangements until 31 March 1984.



J. S. Phillips
Director



G. R. Boyd
Deputy Director

Division of Clinical Services