

RE: Proposal to decline inactive funding applications

Sent to: applicationfeedback@pharmac.govt.nz

7 February 2024

Dear Pharmac Board,

We are writing on behalf of Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand and people impacted by multiple sclerosis (MS) nationwide regarding the proposal to decline inactive applications, namely Cannabidiol with tetrahydrocannabinol (Sativex).

Sativex can be life-changing, relieving the debilitating impacts of muscle spasms in people with MS. MS spasticity affects daily life and a person's ability to engage in activities, quality of life and employment. Spasticity causes significant pain, reduces mobility, increases risks of falls and injuries and impacts sleep and mental health.

Therapeutic options for muscle spasticity are limited and ineffective. Sativex has been approved by Medsafe for the indication of Multiple Sclerosis spasticity and supported by trials providing clinical benefit, safety and efficacy.

However, Sativex is cost prohibitive. The few that can afford it are spending over \$300 every month. While studies show Sativex may not work for everyone, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to try this potentially life-improving treatment.

We request that the application remain open for Sativex and MSNZ be permitted more time to prepare a more comprehensive application for funding for Sativex for MS patients, highlighting the impact this treatment would have on MS patients experiencing spasticity.

Yours Sincerely,



Amanda Rose
National Manager
Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand