

18 April 2018

Technical and Safety Improvement Section
Pharmacovigilance and Special Access Branch
Therapeutic Goods Administration
PO Box 100
WODEN ACT 2606

Re: management and communication of medicines shortages

NPS MedicineWise would like to thank the Therapeutic Goods Administration for the opportunity to provide feedback on the management and communication of medicines shortages.

As you would be aware, NPS MedicineWise is an independent, not-for-profit, evidence-based organisation that enables people to make better decisions about medicines and medical tests.

Medicines shortages have the potential to cause significant disruption to patient care, as well as creating uncertainty for consumers and healthcare professionals alike. As such, we are strongly supportive of regulatory measures that improve the management and communication of medicines shortages – and help to minimise the impact shortages can have on patient care.

We believe balanced, accurate, timely and consistent communication to consumers and healthcare professionals is critical to minimising disruption to patient care and to ensuring quality use of medicines even when the first choice of therapy is unavailable.

It is vitally important consumers and healthcare professionals have clear information on a medicines shortage as soon as possible to prevent delays in arranging alternative treatment. Information on the anticipated duration of a medicine shortage is especially important for consumers who take a medicine that is essential for their wellbeing or where alternative treatments are limited.

NPS MedicineWise has expertise in delivering balanced, evidence-based and tailored communication on medicines and medical tests to consumers and healthcare professionals. We reach significant numbers of consumers and healthcare professionals through a suite of channels that include publications like *Australian Prescriber* and *RADAR*, our national behaviour-change programs, as well as through digital, media and social media. We work collaboratively with other organisations including medical colleges, community and hospital pharmacy organisations, peak bodies and consumer groups to reach audiences, amplify messages, and to ensure that information and education needs of different groups are met. Through the design of our products, we enable informed and effective conversations between health professionals and consumers about options for ongoing management.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how we can work with the TGA and other stakeholders to ensure timely, balanced and evidence-based communication about medicines shortages.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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