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Tēnā kōrua

## Rare Disorders Strategy

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2024 about the Rare Disorders Strategy. I appreciate you both taking the time to write on behalf of Rare Disorders NZ.

As steward of the health system and the Government's principal health advisor, the Ministry of Health is well placed to lead the system to achieve better outcomes for people with rare disorders and their whānau. It is in these capacities that the Ministry of Health is publishing the Rare Disorders Strategy. Across the Ministry of Health and Pharmac, there is a focus, prompted by the Rare Disorder Strategy, on improving health outcomes for people with rare disorders and their whānau.

Our Government recognises that increasing access to medicines is important to improving health outcomes in New Zealand. The recent funding uplift will ensure more New Zealanders can access life-changing medicines, including cancer medicines.

As you may be aware, Pharmac maintains a level of confidentiality around certain details of the options for investment (OFI) list to achieve the best health outcomes for New Zealanders. There are essential commercial reasons which help Pharmac negotiate with suppliers for the best prices and supply arrangements for medicines. This allows more medicines to be funded for more people. This also ensures Pharmac retains flexibility to respond to new evidence and can continue to assess and prioritise newer and more effective treatments that are developed over time.

Which proposals Pharmac intends to progress, and when, can change over time due to the dynamic nature of new funding applications and Pharmac's assessment of the applications over time. This means that at this stage, Pharmac is unable to provide an indication of whether or not the agency will be in a position to take certain applications forward for a funding decision.

I assure you that Pharmac, supported by this Government's record investment, is working hard to improve access to medicines for all New Zealanders, including for people with rare disorders. For example, Pharmac has recently consulted on expanding the range of supplements it funds for phenylketonuria and other inherited metabolic diseases.

I would like to thank you and your team for supporting the Ministry of Health in developing the Rare Disorder Strategy. It is a great achievement and a testament to the shared spirit of collaboration.

Thank you again for writing, I wish you well.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SReti', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Dr Shane Reti  
**Minister of Health**