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Peter Dunne

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Ministry of Health to Decide on Cannabis-based Products

Following his decision on 1 December last year to remove the requirement for Ministry of Health approval to prescribe Sativex for Multiple Sclerosis, Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne has today **delegated decision-making for the prescribing of all cannabis-based products to the Ministry of Health.**

"Last week I wrote to the Director-General of Health, advising him that as of 8 February 2017, applications from specialists to the Ministry to prescribe non-pharmaceutical cannabis-based products will no longer need Ministerial approval. Approval for pharmaceutical grade cannabis products was similarly delegated some years ago" says Mr Dunne.

"As I stated in my delegation letter to the Director-General, when applications first began to be received it was my view that the final decision appropriately lay at Ministerial level, rather than exposing officials to risk, given the complicated and contentious nature of the issue – that is to say the buck stopped with me".

"I have approved every application that has come before me with a positive recommendation – within a matter of minutes once the application came across my desk.

"Since the first application was approved, guidelines have been developed, consulted on and simplified to allow specialists who are interested in accessing such products for their patients a clear, straight-forward and unobstructed pathway to acquiring the appropriate products.

"I am satisfied that with the development of these guidelines, and with a number of successful applications having been subsequently completed, any risk associated with the early processes has largely abated and I have confidence in the Ministry of Health to handle the process in its entirety from now on.

"It is my intention to write (this week) to the New Zealand Medical Association and the Pharmacy Society of New Zealand outlining my decision and my ongoing expectation that medical professionals consider the prescribing of cannabis-based products with an open mind.

"I also intend to include a list of internationally available cannabis-based products that are either pharmaceutical grade or Good Manufacturing Practice certified, to provide additional clarity on the issue", Mr Dunne said.

For further information go to <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/medicines-control/prescribing-cannabis-based-products>

Peter Dunne Health



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