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## Pharmacist prescribers given authority to prescribe 200 more medicines

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**P** Some pharmacists can now prescribe nearly 200 more medicines, which the Health Ministry says will free up doctors to help other patients.



Photo: 123RF

The ministry's top pharmacist Andi Shirtcliffe said currently there are 37 pharmacist prescribers who have specialised knowledge of medicines in defined areas of practice.

The expanded scope, which follows public consultation, will give New Zealanders better and more equitable access to medicines at a time when Covid is stretching all health professionals.

About 60 percent of the 59 submissions received were in favour of the change.

"We know, with Covid-19, how busy all health professionals can be. These additions to the schedule mean pharmacist prescribers can help to alleviate that pressure - improving access of care for patients, freeing up other practitioners to help more patients," said Shirtcliffe.

The ministry had worked closely with the Pharmacy Council throughout the process.

"The world of medicines changes quickly and it's important to us and to the Pharmacy Council that this schedule reflects the new medicines available to ensure improved and more equitable access to treatments," Shirtcliffe said.