

**MEDIA RELEASE: Issued by the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD)**

**Pharmac’s decision to fund continuous glucose monitors, insulin pumps, and insulin pump consumables.**

29 August 2024

New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD) welcomes Pharmac’s decision to fund continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps, which allow automated insulin delivery, for people with type 1 diabetes (T1D) from 1 October 2024.

Funding of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) and increasing availability of insulin pumps is momentous for those with type 1 diabetes and their whānau, and this funding will change lives and improve equity in access to care and outcomes.

Dr Rosemary Hall, Endocrinologist and President of the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes, says “this is arguably the biggest day for people with type 1 diabetes in Aotearoa since the arrival of insulin. There will be great excitement amongst the diabetes community. The technology is life-changing for people with T1D and their whānau, reduces diabetes distress, improves mental wellbeing and quality of life, and reduces hospitalisations and medical complications”.

People with T1D are unable to produce insulin to process the glucose that comes from eating most types of food. Without insulin, glucose levels will increase concerningly and providing too much insulin may cause dangerous low glucose levels. Getting insulin doses right requires constant glucose monitoring – traditionally with painful finger prick tests. Continuous glucose monitoring transforms this process. When CGMs and insulin pumps are used in combination they function as an artificial pancreas. Glucose levels are easier to manage and the lives of people with T1D and their whānau are transformed. The high cost of this technology means it has been out of reach for many, increasing the gap between those who can afford it and those who cannot.

“New Zealand conducted research shows that when all people have access to these devices outcomes become equal. After years of campaigning, and seeing increasing inequity for people with T1D, we

now have the devices to provide the best standard of care for all those with T1D in Aotearoa New Zealand” says Dr Hall.

The new funding will provide a choice of two high quality CGMs for all people with T1D. The two funded pumps combine with either brand of funded CGMs to allow for automated insulin delivery (AID) systems with considerable consumer choice. We support Pharmac’s proposal to allow people in specific circumstances to apply for an alternative option that may suit their unique circumstances. We appreciate Pharmac’s considered response to the consultation process, and the revisions in the criteria that resulted from feedback and discussion.

“We realise that many existing users of Medtronic systems will need to transition to a funded alternative and we acknowledge the stress and anxiety they may feel. We are pleased to see that Pharmac have allowed for a two year timeframe to transition to a new system, and flexibility and choice in the new products.”

Specialist diabetes services and their partners in primary care are now faced with the significant task of enabling access and support for all those with T1D who wish to use CGM and AID. NZSSD will work to support clinicians through this transition and calls on Health New Zealand to ensure that clinical resourcing is sufficient to enable the successful roll out of these technologies in Aotearoa.

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**About the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD):**

The NZSSD is an incorporated society that is open to those involved in the care of people with diabetes. Its members include diabetes specialist physicians and paediatricians, nurse practitioners, diabetes specialist nurses, psychologists, pharmacists, obstetricians, podiatrists, dietitians, scientists, ophthalmologists, general practitioners, community health workers and researchers.

The NZSSD is the national advisory body and leading diabetes clinical network on clinical and scientific matters. The NZSSD's objectives are to promote the study of diabetes and the best, equitable, standards of care for diabetes in Aotearoa New Zealand.

<https://www.nzssd.org.nz/>

