

# Aide-Mémoire

## Advice on meeting request from Merck, Sharp & Dohme

<b>Date due to MO:</b>	18 December 2023	<b>Action required by:</b>	N/A
<b>Security level:</b>	IN CONFIDENCE	<b>Health Report number:</b>	H2023034192
<b>To:</b>	Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health		
<b>Consulted:</b>	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

## Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
<b>Allison Bennett</b>	Group Manager, Health System Settings, Strategy, Policy and Legislation	s 9(2)(a)
<b>Stacey Connor</b>	Manager, System Enablers, Strategy, Policy and Legislation	s 9(2)(a)

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## Advice on meeting request from Merck, Sharp & Dohme

**Date due:** 18 December 2023

**To:** Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister of Health

**Security level:** IN CONFIDENCE

**Health Report number:** H2023034192

**Details of meeting:** Pharmaceutical company, Merck, Sharp & Dohme (MSD) have requested a meeting with you as Minister of Health, at your 'earliest convenience'.

**Purpose of meeting/proposal:** MSD have proposed the meeting to outline some recommendations they have regarding the implementation of the Government's cancer medicines policy. These recommendations specifically concern the Cancer Control Agency and Pharmac.

**Comment:** s 9(2)(g)(i)

Alternatively, it could be delegated to Hon David Seymour as the Minister responsible for Pharmac and the development of a Medicines Strategy. Further information is provided below.



Allison Bennett  
Group Manager, Health System Settings  
**Strategy Policy and Legislation**

## Background information on Merck, Sharp & Dohme

- MSD began trading in New Zealand in 1962. They are a subsidiary of Merck & Co. Inc, USA.
- MSD(NZ) focuses on clinical research and supplies medicines and vaccines for New Zealand patients across a number of therapeutic areas including oncology, vaccinology and infectious diseases. They have research and development, and production facilities in New Zealand.
- MSD(NZ) provided submissions to Health Select Committee on the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Bill, and the Therapeutic Products Bill. Their submissions covered:
  - direct-to-consumer-advertising
  - introduction of legislated regulatory review timeframes
  - allowance of technology and other innovations commonly used overseas to help improve the efficiency of regulatory reviews
  - cost recovery of regulators and sharing of information
  - Pharmac operational considerations; and
  - the inclusion of a Medicines Strategy as a 'key health system strategic document'.

## Responses to your office's questions

*What do you consider is the priority for the Minister to attend – high or low?*

- **s 9(2)(g)(i)**
- Given the topic areas, it may be appropriate for the meeting request to be delegated to Hon David Seymour, Associate Minister of Health (Pharmac). Note the Ministry intends to provide advice to Hon Seymour on the medicines programme, including the development of a medicines strategy, early in 2024.
- Officials can attend meetings between Ministers and industry representatives.

*Any risks of either attending or not attending the meeting?*

- There are no immediate risks of meeting MSD(NZ) given they wish to discuss their recommendations on current government policy. However, if you wish to take this meeting, we recommend seeking advice from the Ministry on implications of implementing any of the proposed recommendations.
- We note the discussion topics are related to the initiative to purchase 13 cancer treatments. Options for this initiative are undergoing the Minister's active consideration. We note MSD(NZ) are an identified supplier of one of the treatments.
- A further consideration is that engaging with pharmaceutical suppliers individually may not provide a strategic sector view. It may be more beneficial to meet the industry representative groups that cover a broader range of suppliers (Medicines New Zealand and Consumer Healthcare Products New Zealand). One of the authors of MSD(NZ)'s letter – Vanessa Gasgoigne – is also a board member of Medicines New Zealand.
- A meeting with medicines industry representative groups could be held alongside Hon Dr David Seymour in the context of the development of the Medicines Strategy, of which he is responsible.

*What are the benefits of the Minister attending?*

- A meeting may be beneficial to help understand of perspectives of MSD(NZ) in relation to the cancer medicines, services and a wider medicines strategy; noting this may not be representative of a complete industry's view and MSD(NZ) have a commercial interest.

*Should a Ministerial response or a DREP be commissioned in lieu of a meeting?*

- If you decide not to take the meeting at this time, we recommend you commission a response outlining the transfer to Hon David Seymour, Associate Minister of Health (Pharmac).

PROACTIVELY RELEASED