Extending access to primary care services from 1 December 2018
Information for pharmacies
Bulletin Two: 29 November 2018

From 1 December 2018, several changes will take place to provide people with greater access to primary care. The changes are part of Budget 2018 and include:

- Extending access to lower cost general practice visits to all CSC holders and their dependants aged 14 to 17. This includes injury-related visits (ACC).
- Extending zero fee general practice visits and exemption from the standard prescription co-payment charge (usually $5 per item) on subsidised prescription items to children under the age of 14. This also includes after-hours services at participating pharmacies and injury related visits (ACC).

The changes provide additional subsidies to enable non-very low cost access general practices to charge patients no more than $18.50 for enrolled adults and $12.50 for enrolled youth aged 14 to 17 for a standard day time consultation with a doctor or nurse.

What you need to know
Zero fees for under-14s

From Saturday, 1 December 2018, the standard prescription co-payment (usually $5 per item) on subsidised prescription medicines will not be charged for children under the age of 14. This is an extension of one year from the current zero fees for under-13s scheme.

DHBs will contract after-hours pharmacy services for under-14s in the same way they currently do for under-13s. This is likely to be an extension to existing contracts that DHBs have in place to provide free after hours services for under-13s.

Zero Fees for Under-14s – key messages about prescription item charges

- Children aged 13 and under will no longer be charged the standard prescription fee (usually $5) for each prescription item.
- Pharmacies may charge for extra services such as delivering medicines or special packaging.
- The costs for medicines that are not fully funded by PHARMAC remain the same.
- Zero fees for under-14s will apply from 1 December 2018.

Information for the public

Posters and patient information sheets have been developed for the public and have been provided with this bulletin. You can also access these resources on the Ministry of Health website at health.govt.nz/zerofees. You may wish to print and display the poster in your pharmacy. You may also wish to print the information sheet, which has useful information about lower cost visits and frequently asked questions.