

Hon Peter Dunne

Associate Minister of Health



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Media Release

Dunne: Universal List of Medicines released

The New Zealand Universal List of Medicines, designed to prevent potentially harmful confusion about medicines has been given its general release, Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne said today.

The list, known as the NZULM, provides the health sector with an up-to-date, trusted, one-stop-shop of core and commonly used information about medicines and will improve patient care, he said.

“The list will help prevent misunderstandings and confusion about medicines during the management and transfer of patient care by presenting medicines information from Medsafe, PHARMAC and the Pharmacy Guild using a common terminology, within a single source.”

Before the NZULM, there were several lists with information on prescribing and dispensing medicines, and this created room for confusion among doctors and pharmacists, and ultimately, patients, Mr Dunne said.

“For example, a GP and a community pharmacy will often describe a medicine differently. Even subtle naming differences can affect electronic list accuracy.

“Varying descriptions of the same medicine can actually cause a situation where the patient suffers harm, and can cause problems across all care situations, including errors in prescribing, dispensing and administration; inefficient clinical and business processes; and compromised clinical decision support services,” he said.

The NZULM is the first of several phases building up to the New Zealand Medicines Formulary, a much more complete information system, including clinical information about medicines.

“In the longer term, that will be the best and easiest reference for doctors, pharmacists and all other health professionals,” he said.

Mr Dunne said this first general release of the information covers medicines used in primary and secondary care and will be updated and released monthly.

Users will usually access the NZULM information through their business or clinical software. They might also use the NZULM website at www.nzulm.org.nz to obtain NZULM information directly.

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