

28 April 2011

## **Media release**

### **New funded treatment for epilepsy**

People with epilepsy will have a new funded treatment from 1 May, when PHARMAC begins funding for lacosamide (Vimpat).

Lacosamide will be funded for people whose epilepsy symptoms haven't been adequately controlled by currently-funded treatments – and for those people who have unacceptable side-effects from other treatments. PHARMAC's clinical advisory committee, PTAC, identified that there was an unmet clinical need for another funded treatment for these people.

PHARMAC's medical director Dr Peter Moodie says epilepsy seizures can be difficult to control and treatment needs to be tailored to each patient's individual needs.

"Epilepsy is a condition that can have a profound effect on people's lives," says Dr Moodie. "Having a range of treatments to try is important, so it's pleasing to be able to widen the availability of treatments to include lacosamide."

"This funding decision will add to the range of funded treatments available, which will help people who have already tried other treatments and have found that they haven't worked for them."

Lacosamide is being funded via Special Authority, which means doctors have to apply to PHARMAC to receive funded access for their patients.

PHARMAC estimates that after three years, approximately 400 people will be prescribed lacosamide. PHARMAC's estimate is that funding lacosamide will cost \$4.8 million over five years (including pharmacy markups and dispensing fees).

**ENDS**

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