



# THE PAEDIATRIC SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

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26 January, 2015

Geraldine MacGibbon  
Senior Therapeutic Group Manager/Team Leader  
PHARMAC  
PO Box 10 254  
Wellington 6143  
26 January 2014

Dear Ms MacGibbon,

## **Re Proposal to reinstate monthly dispensing on various pharmaceuticals (remove 'stat' dispensing)**

I am writing on behalf of the Pharmacists and Therapeutics Special Interest Group of the Paediatric Society. We have noted that Sodium valproate tablets and oral liquid (Epilim®) are included in the proposal and would like to make some comments.

We are concerned if families have to obtain sodium valproate monthly but have other AEDs which are dispensed stat eg topiramate, phenytoin and carbamazepine. These families are often dealing with complicated situations, including limited transport, and to add in another visit, just to collect one repeat medicine, can lead to added stress for these families and possibly decrease compliance.

Many paediatric patients are on stable regimens of sodium valproate which makes monthly dispensing an inconvenience rather than an opportunity to check compliance etc.

- We are wondering if the data you have showing the use of sodium valproate and pharmacy visits refers to patients taking sodium valproate for seizure control, particularly paediatric patients or patients taking this for mood stabilisation? Would it be possible to look at the data for paediatric patients and see if visits to pharmacies are often more than three monthly?
- Would it be acceptable to have a restriction like the 'certified exempt' for sodium valproate, as there is for topiramate, for those patients who also take another AED which is currently dispensed 'stat'?

We also note prednisolone liquid is proposed to change to monthly dispensing. For our patients on this long term (years) eg for muscular dystrophy, it would be more convenient to remain with stat dispensing.

We would ask that PHARMAC review these two medicines, in particular, for paediatric patients, where decisions to take medicines is reliant on adults to collect them.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Louise McDermott  
**Chairperson**  
**Pharmacist and Therapeutics SIG**  
**Paediatric Society of NZ**