



Hon Doctor Shane Reti, Minister of Health

cc: Hon Matt Doocey, Associate Minister of Health
cc: Hon Casey Costello, Associate Minister of Health

29 November 2023

Dear Minister,

During the pre-election campaign the National Party expressed intention to repeal the removal of the five dollar co-payment on medicine prescriptions that was brought into effect on 1 July 2023. As a national diabetes specialty nursing college, we urge you to reconsider, and recommend that the prescription medicines co-payment is not re-introduced. We represent nurses working in diabetes health across primary and secondary care in Aotearoa, and have seen the significant positive impact the removal of the prescription medicines co-payment has made for whānau with diabetes.

The previous five dollar co-payment on prescription medicines was a significant barrier to people obtaining medicines, and thus reducing adherence. Unfortunately we would hear of patients having to delay collecting prescription medicines such as insulin from their pharmacy, as a part of a fiscal decision making process to ensure they could afford to buy food to feed their family or fund other costs of living. As you are aware, patients with diabetes often have multiple comorbidities, and thus extensive medicines lists, so we strongly supported the removal of the co-payment as a means of reducing a barrier to accessing medicines.

Relying upon the previous prescription subsidy scheme is not supported, as people still had to pay for 20 prescription items each year to qualify, thus meaning they had to spend \$100 per year before becoming eligible. For many patients with diabetes, this posed a significant financial challenge to obtain medicines. Our college strongly supports the removal of any barriers to accessing prescribed medications.

Signed for on behalf of the Aotearoa College of Diabetes Nurses.

Amanda de Hoop
Nurse Practitioner
Chairperson - Aotearoa College of Diabetes Nurses