



13 February 2025

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Tēnā koe

## **Proposal to widen access to medicines for blood cancer, inflammatory bowel diseases, eczema and rheumatoid arthritis**

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (the College) is the largest medical college in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our membership of 6,439 specialist GPs and rural hospital doctors comprises 40 percent of the specialist medical workforce. The Medical Council of New Zealand accredits the College to deliver vocational training to the specialist General Practitioner and Rural Hospital Doctor workforce. We are committed to prioritising the reduction of health inequities experienced by honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the rights of Māori. To do this we prioritise initiatives that support our members to develop cultural safety capabilities through our Training, Continuing Professional Development and Quality programmes.<sup>1</sup>

Our members provide first point of contact medical care to patients and their whānau. Each year, there are approximately 23 million<sup>1</sup> visits across 1077 general practices, whose clinical teams effectively manage 90 percent of health concerns in Aotearoa.

### **Our submission**

#### **Atopic dermatitis**

The College submission relates to the Special Authority for Upadacitinib listed in (Section B and Part II of Section H). Our points relating to the relevant specialist or any relevant practitioner:

- **Initial application** - (atopic dermatitis) - only from a relevant specialist or any relevant practitioner on the recommendation of a relevant specialist.
- **Renewal – (atopic dermatitis)** only from a relevant specialist or any relevant practitioner on the recommendation of a relevant specialist.

#### **In summary**

The College notes the proposal to broaden the scope of prescribers to include any relevant specialist, which includes General Practitioners. This is a step change and Upadacitinib would be the first immunotherapy agent considered in such a way in NZ. The criteria under which it could be prescribed are beyond the scope of most general practice settings and GP specialist training. The use of the criteria ensures that GPs will not prescribe the medication inappropriately or erroneously, as complex dermatological review and understanding of scoring tools

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health Data (2023)

is necessary. However, it does allow GPs working within a Special Interest scope of dermatology to support their patients, and thus we are comfortable that this would be appropriate.

If you require further clarification, please contact Maureen Gillon, Manager Policy, Advocacy, Insights – [Maureen.Gillon@rnzcgp.org.nz](mailto:Maureen.Gillon@rnzcgp.org.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



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