

Access to Medicines Working Group

Communique

5 August 2022

The Access to Medicines Working Group (AMWG) met via videoconference on 5 August 2022. Attendees included representatives from Medicines Australia, the pharmaceutical industry and the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department).

An Executive Summary of a review of the PBS activity-based cost model was presented by the independent consultant engaged by the Department to undertake the review. The consultant concluded that the Department's cost model was cost recovering appropriately and met the requirements specified by the Australian Government Charging Framework and the Australian Cost Recovery Guidelines. Members noted the four key recommendations arising from the review and the actions the Department has committed to taking to address each recommendation. Members also noted the Executive Summary of the independent review will be made publicly available on the PBS website.

Members discussed the publication of biosimilar uptake data and noted that the Department is investigating the public release of brand level data, noting privacy and data ethics considerations.

Members discussed the collection of metrics linked to Stage 2 of the PBS Process Improvements. Members agreed to further discussion regarding the Department's proposal for the collection and publication of a qualitative metric. Members agreed that the capture and publication of consumer-focused metrics is useful, provided it is done in a meaningful manner. Members agreed that the Department would make revisions to such metrics and seek further advice from the Department's Consumer Consultative Committee (CCC), on the utility of the metric to consumers.

Members noted the commencement of the new Strategic Agreement between the Department and medicines industry on 1 July 2022 and discussed appropriate ways to monitor key priorities. Members agreed to a further out-of-session discussion to finalise an appropriate work plan and reporting method for progress made on Strategic Agreement priorities.

Members discussed the framework of the AMWG and the role and number of subgroups to address key goals of the new Strategic Agreement. Members also discussed the functions of the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC). Members agreed that the AMWG should work towards increasing the group's efficiency and reducing duplicative administrative functions.

Members noted that changes to the work priorities of the AMWG must first be agreed to by the Minister for Health and Aged Care. Members agreed for further out-of-session discussions on changes to the AMWG structure.

Members discussed advice provided by the International Consortium of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) in May 2022, that publication of summary clinical data by Health Technology Assessment agencies is not considered duplicative. Based on this advice, the Department proposed changes to the PBS Procedure Guidance regarding redaction requests for clinical data in PBAC Public Summary Documents. Members noted that further time is needed to consider this matter and it will be discussed further out-of-session.

The AMWG members will reconvene at the next meeting which is expected to be held later this year.