

3 March 2026

## **New report highlights opportunities to deliver faster and fairer access to innovative medicines for New Zealand patients**

A new independent report released at Parliament today examines the challenges New Zealand faces in providing timely access to innovative medicines and outlines practical opportunities for system-wide improvement.

The report, *Access to Innovative Pharmaceutical Medicines in New Zealand*, draws on international comparisons, published evidence and consultation with patient organisations and clinicians. It identifies **five priority areas for improvement and 25 recommendations** aimed at enhancing patient access to medicines, strengthening equity, transparency and ultimately, patient outcomes.

The review finds that New Zealand patients often experience **significantly longer delays** accessing new medicines than patients in comparable OECD countries, with funding decisions frequently occurring 7-10 years after regulatory approval. It also highlights the broader impacts of delayed access, including avoidable illness, pressure on the health system, and reduced workforce participation.

**Owen Smith, General Manager, Bristol Myers Squibb New Zealand, said:** “This report highlights the urgent need for significant reform as well as the opportunity for New Zealand to continue strengthening how it enables timely access to innovative medicines, while maintaining the integrity and sustainability of the health system. There was a clear and strong consensus from those consulted that reform is necessary to improve access to medicines in New Zealand to support better outcomes for patients and, over time, help reduce pressure across the wider health system.”

**Peter Boyes, author of the report, said:** “The findings reflect consistent feedback from patients and clinicians that New Zealand’s medicines access system does not always keep pace with the speed of medical innovation seen overseas. This review is intended to support constructive, evidence-based discussion about how the system could evolve to better meet patient needs, while remaining transparent, equitable and fiscally responsible.”

The report emphasises the importance of:

- Viewing investment in medicines as a contributor to long-term health and productivity
- Strengthening structured patient and clinician engagement in medicines access decision-making
- Improving transparency and timeliness within assessment processes
- Prioritising equitable access for all New Zealand patients including Māori, Pacific peoples and underserved communities

The report consolidates the work underway, stakeholder insights, and patient organisation perspectives and provides a shared evidence base to guide ongoing collaboration and future policy development on medicines access in New Zealand.

The full report and executive summary will be available at [www.bms.com/nz](http://www.bms.com/nz)

## **ENDS**

Media enquiries:

**Peter Boyes**

**0275 540 500 | [peter@boyespr.co.nz](mailto:peter@boyespr.co.nz)**

## **Disclosure**

Bristol Myers Squibb supports disclosure and transparency on interactions between the healthcare industry and healthcare professionals to ensure public trust and confidence. No expert spokespeople have been offered compensation for their



involvement in this medical media campaign. All expert spokespeople have been briefed on the approved use of this product and their obligations with regard to promotion to the medical profession.

### **About Bristol Myers Squibb™**

Bristol Myers Squibb™ is a global biopharmaceutical company whose mission is to discover, develop and deliver innovative medicines that help patients prevail over serious diseases. For more information about Bristol Myers Squibb™, visit us at [BMS.com](https://www.bms.com) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **Bristol Myers Squibb: Creating a Better Future for People with Cancer**

Bristol Myers Squibb is inspired by a single vision – transforming patients’ lives through science.

The goal of the company’s cancer research is to deliver medicines that offer each patient a better, healthier life, and to make cure a possibility.

Building on a legacy across a broad range of cancers that have changed survival expectations for many, Bristol Myers Squibb researchers are exploring new frontiers in personalised medicine and, through innovative digital platforms, are turning data into insights that sharpen their focus. Deep understanding of causal human biology, cutting-edge capabilities, and differentiated research platforms uniquely position the company to approach cancer from every angle.

Cancer can have a relentless grasp on many parts of a patient’s life, and Bristol Myers Squibb is committed to taking actions to address all aspects of care, from diagnosis to survivorship. As a leader in cancer care, Bristol Myers Squibb is working to empower all people with cancer to have a better future.

Further information is available on request from Bristol Myers Squibb Australia Pty Ltd, ABN 33 004 333 322, Level 2, 4 Nexus Court, Mulgrave, VIC, 3170. ™ Trademark. Prepared: January 2024. 1425-AU-2400002.

***#ends#***