

Committee Secretariat
Health Committee
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By Email

Submission on the Medicines Amendment Bill

The New Zealand Veterinary Association Te Pae Kīrehe (NZVA) is the largest membership organisation representing veterinarians in New Zealand. We support members through leadership, education, guidance and wellbeing support.

The NZVA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Medicines Amendment Bill 2025. While we acknowledge the Bill is focused on improving access to human medicines, we are concerned that it overlooks the implications for the veterinary profession. Veterinarians are authorised prescribers under the current Act and rely on timely access to both approved and unapproved medicines to meet their obligations to animal welfare. Without explicit inclusion in the revised legislation, veterinarians may lose access to essential medicines and tools of care.

The Bill proposes extending prescribing rights under Section 29 of the Medicines Act to nurse practitioners. The NZVA strongly supports this extension in principle and recommends that veterinarians also be included in this amendment.

Veterinarians occasionally need to rely on unapproved human medicines, particularly in companion animal practice where no veterinary-registered alternative exists. These scenarios are common and include treatments for routine, emergency, or species-specific conditions. Section 29 medicines are often familiar, clinically appropriate and accessible. The existing alternative (importation under Section 25) is costly, administratively complex, and often too slow to be practical in time-sensitive cases where animal welfare is compromised.

Veterinarians already prescribe a range of prescription medicines and controlled drugs competently, within a robust professional and regulatory framework. Inclusion of veterinarians in Section 29 prescribing provisions would reflect the realities of veterinary practice and uphold high standards of animal welfare by enabling timely access to medicines already familiar and safely used by veterinarians.

Veterinarians rely on access to unapproved human medicines when there is no available registered veterinary medicine. These are not exceptional circumstances but a routine and essential aspect of veterinary care in New Zealand due to the limited number of veterinary-registered products available domestically. Changes to pharmacy obligations or supply pathways under Section 29 must not unintentionally restrict access for veterinarians and the animals they provide care for. Any legislative updates must retain the flexibility required to deliver appropriate care.

The NZVA supports the intent of the Medicines Amendment Bill to improve access to medicines and streamline approval processes. However, to avoid unintended consequences for animal health and veterinary practice, it is essential that veterinarians are explicitly included in amendments to Section 29 and access to unapproved medicines is preserved and supported.

The veterinary profession plays a critical role in upholding animal welfare, protecting public health, and ensuring responsible medicine use. We urge the Health Select Committee and the Ministry of Health to engage with the veterinary sector to ensure that reforms are inclusive, effective, and future-proofed.

Nāku iti noa, nā,



Kevin Bryant
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New Zealand Veterinary Association Te Pae Kīrehe