

Hon Chris Hipkins



MP for Remutaka

Minister of Education

Minister of Health

Minister of State Services

Leader of the House

Minister Responsible for Ministerial Services

Dr Richard Stein
Chairman
Crohn's & Colitis NZ Charitable Trust
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Ref. CH201068

Dear Dr Stein et al

Thank you for your emails of 5 and 26 August and 17, 21 September to me, and of 2 and 18 September 2020 to the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, about your petition to Parliament regarding treatment for inflammatory bowel disease. I appreciate you taking the time to write, and I am very sorry that I am unable to meet with you prior to the election.

I acknowledge your comments regarding PHARMAC's funding decisions for the treatment of severe Crohn's disease and colitis. As Minister of Health, it is not appropriate for me to become involved in decisions made by PHARMAC on individual medicines.

PHARMAC's role and its statutory independence from the Government are crucial when funding medicines in New Zealand. I appreciate that my inability to become involved may be disappointing, but it is important for the public to have confidence in the impartiality of funding decisions.

As you are aware, PHARMAC works within a fixed budget and is unable to fund every available medicine or medical device. It has to make difficult decisions about how to spend available funds in order to obtain the best health outcomes for all New Zealanders. This involves assessing the relative merits of the range of medicines and medical devices it could fund.

Thank you again for writing. I wish you the very best.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CH', representing Chris Hipkins.

Chris Hipkins
Minister of Health