

PRESS RELEASE

Tony Ryall, Rodney Hide

Cabinet paves way for updated medicines regulations

Fluoride toothpastes, anti-dandruff shampoos and anti-pimple creams commonly sold in supermarkets will no longer be treated like medicines once new regulations have been drafted and approved.

Health Minister Tony Ryall says, "Cabinet has approved policy changes that pave the way for the drafting of amendments to the Medicines Regulations 1984 and the Medicines (Standing Order) Regulations 2002.

"The new regulations will remove many requirements that are unnecessary, ineffective or excessively costly, and they will better align the law with modern practice. They are expected to come into effect by middle of next year.

"One of the policy changes will allow pharmacists to substitute an alternative brand of a medicine in certain circumstances, where clinically appropriate. Electronic prescribing will also be advanced.

"Other changes align medicine labelling requirements with those of Australia, reducing the need for re-labelling and repackaging," Mr Ryall says.

Minister of Regulatory Reform, Rodney Hide says "The current regime is onerous for business, restricts consumer choice, and is costly and expensive to individuals, without creating significant safety benefits.

"The new regulations will continue to protect consumers, while giving them easier access to key medicines and related products.

"This is a good outcome for all New Zealanders and is a great example of exactly what the Government's Regulatory Reform agenda is designed to achieve," Mr Hide said.

Detailed information on the outcome of those consultations is available from the *Report of the Analysis of Submissions and Final Decisions on Proposed Amendments to Regulations under the Medicines Act 1981* is available at: www.moh.govt.nz/publications

Source: Beehive