



No more missing out on medical conferences

We heard from BusinessNZ and Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) that rules preventing advertising unapproved medicines is a barrier to New Zealand hosting medical trade shows and conferences.

As a result, New Zealand may be missing out on the revenue these events generate, as well as flow on spending in our tourism sector.

BEIA told us this lost opportunity could mean New Zealand is missing out on as much as \$90 million in potential revenue from medical conferences over the next few years.

What did we do?

Rules against directly advertising medicines yet to be consented by Medsafe relates to the perceived risk that pharmaceutical companies may attempt to circumvent formal medicine approval processes.

This is because unapproved medicines can be prescribed by medical practitioners, provided certain conditions are met under the Medicines Act.

We completed a rapid review and found this caution and our current broad definition of ‘advertising’ in the Medicines Act has led to the effective prohibition on medical trade shows advertising new medicines to medical professionals.

We found this approach is out of step with other jurisdictions like Australia, the United States of America, Europe and Canada which all have less restrictive regimes when it comes to advertising unapproved medicines in controlled settings.

We met with Medsafe and the Ministry of Health to understand the legislation and potential remedies to this issue and provided our advice to ministers.

[Regulation Minister David Seymour, Health Minister Simeon Brown and Tourism and Hospitality Minister Louise Upston](#) agreed and say these laws will be reformed so medicines yet to be consented by Medsafe can be advertised at medical conferences in New Zealand, instead of New Zealand health professionals needing to travel overseas.

What is the benefit for New Zealanders?

Removing the red tape around medical conferences will make New Zealand a better destination for conference organisers, while also making it easier for our own healthcare professionals to keep up with the latest innovations in health products and medicines.