Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Quitcards to be replaced by an alternative request to provide subsidised NRT

28 August 2024

The provision of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) via Quitcards has been in place since 2000. There are now many more options for accessing subsidised and unsubsidised NRT, such as from authorised smoking cessation providers, community pharmacies, direct provision from pharmacists, and supermarkets.

Local and international data supports the effectiveness of quitting through a smoking cessation provider who offers multi-sessional behaviour support combined with stop smoking medicines, including NRT, for example, Stop smoking services | Smokefree or Quitline – Quit Smoking.

Health New Zealand has made the decision to stop supporting Quitcards from 1 October 2024. From this date, current authorised Quitcard Providers (known as Smokefree Providers from 1 October 2024) will issue their clients with written advice (called 'Advice to Client'), that can be shared with or sent directly to a community pharmacy for the recommended subsidised NRT product(s) to be dispensed.
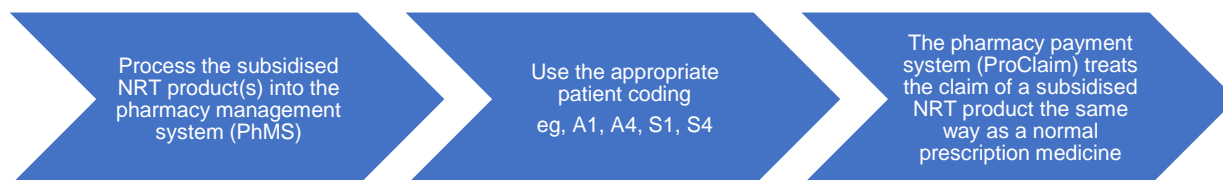
Community pharmacies that receive the 'Advice to Client' from authorised Smokefree Providers are not required to provide any additional motivational support. The responsibility for the advice and the ongoing oversight of the client continues to be with the Smokefree Provider issuing the written advice. The 'Advice to Client' letters should be processed at a community pharmacy in the same way as Quitcards were and the prescriber coded as MC99999 (Appendix 1).

New Smokefree Providers will be required to complete the same training as previously required by Quitcard Providers, that is, the Stop Smoking Practitioner Programme.

An example of an 'Advice to Client' letter is attached (Appendix 2).

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Appendix 2. Claiming of funded NRT products through community pharmacy

| Process the subsidised NRT product(s) into the pharmacy management system (PhMS) | Use the appropriate patient coding eg, A1, A4, S1, S4 | The pharmacy payment system (ProClaim) treats the claim of a subsidised NRT product the same way as a normal prescription medicine |

Prescriber details:
1. Authorised Smokefree Providers 'Advice to Client' letters: MC99999 or
2. On prescription: doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse prescriber, pharmacist prescriber etc, name and registration or
3. Pharmacist direct provision: pharmacist's name and registration number[¥]

- Community pharmacies may claim the provision of a subsidised NRT product via a prescription, from an 'Advice to Client' letter written by an authorised Smokefree Provider, or the direct provision from a pharmacist (as defined in the Pharmac Pharmaceutical Schedule General Rules and Definitions).

- A $5 prescription co-payment fee is chargeable to a Service User for each type and strength of subsidised NRT product, except from those Service Users who are exempt from this charge as per the current funding/claiming rules.

- If a prescription co-payment is paid for a subsidised NRT product (whether paid by the Service User or a pharmacy who covers the prescription co-payment fee themselves), the subsidised NRT product will count toward the Service User's (or Service User's family unit) prescription subsidy card (PSC) count.

- Quitcards will cease to be issued from authorised Smokefree Providers from 1 October 2024 and will be replaced by an 'Advice to Client' letter.

- Claims for subsidised NRT products from a Quitcard will be accepted if the Quitcard is presented by a Service User to a community pharmacy within three months from the date it was issued (ie, up to 31 December 2024).

- When a pharmacist provides a subsidised NRT product via the 'Direct Provision' route, the responsibility for the clinical oversight, appropriate selection of type and strength of subsidised NRT product, and counselling on the use of NRT product to the Service User sits with the issuing pharmacist.

- A community pharmacy may charge a private ('user pays' consultation fee to the Service User for the direct provision of the subsidised NRT product unless there is an agreement in place between Health NZ and the pharmacy for funding the consultation fee. If there is an agreement in place Health NZ will directly reimburse the community pharmacy according to the agreement service specifications.

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¥ = A pharmacist must ensure that their full name and registration number is entered in the prescriber field in the pharmacy management system (PhMS) for the direct provision of subsidised NRT products.

Appendix 2. Example Advice to Client letter

(Smokefree providers to transfer this template to their own branding, letter head/logo)

Advice to Client

Date   **Client ID**

Name

Address

Phone

DOB

NHI

Congratulations on enrolling with us to support you on your smokefree journey.
Our smokefree provider will support you with weekly behavioural support and resources to become smokefree and stay smokefree.

We recommend you obtain the following nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products from your local community pharmacy to aid with urges to smoke and withdrawal symptoms, making stopping smoking more manageable:

Product	Dose	Frequency	Duration
Nicotine Patch	☐ 21 mg ☐ 14 mg ☐ 7 mg	Use ___ per day	☐ 4 weeks ☐ 8 weeks ☐ 12 weeks
Nicotine Gum	☐ 4 mg ☐ 2 mg	Use ___ per day	☐ 4 weeks ☐ 8 weeks ☐ 12 weeks
Nicotine Lozenge	☐ 2 mg ☐ 1 mg	Use ___ per day	☐ 4 weeks ☐ 8 weeks ☐ 12 weeks

To the Pharmacist:
Please dispense the above subsidised NRT products, and feel free to contact us with any questions.

This 'Advice to Client' replaces the Quitcard and should be dispensed and claimed in the same way. The existing Pharmaceutical Schedule rules and guidance in the Pharmacy Procedures Manual that apply to subsidised NRT provision on Quitcards also apply to this 'Advice to Client'.

Provider's details

Provider

Identifier/registration number

Address

Phone