

# Request for Proposals

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Medicinal cannabis educational resource  
for health practitioners

## Opportunity

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is an invitation to suitably qualified respondents to submit a proposal to develop content for an educational resource targeted at New Zealand health practitioners.

We are seeking to develop an educational resource that will provide health practitioners with basic information on medicinal cannabis. Currently, many health practitioners do not feel they have access to enough information to discuss the risk-benefit of medicinal cannabis with their patients, whanau or families, and make to effective clinical decisions. This resource will aim to fill that gap by providing a factual and objective primer on medicinal cannabis. The resource is not intended to provide clinical guidance but will provide health practitioners with a good starting point to understand medicinal cannabis and its potential uses.

## Overview

The Medicinal Cannabis Scheme (the Scheme) came into effect on 1 April 2020 following approval of the Misuse of Drugs (Medicinal Cannabis) Regulations 2019. The Medicinal Cannabis Scheme allows a licenced domestic industry for the cultivation, manufacture and supply of medicinal cannabis and sets the minimum quality standard for which all products must meet. Manufacturers and wholesalers cannot supply products which have not been verified as meeting the minimum quality standard. The Medicinal Cannabis Agency (the Agency) has been established within the Ministry of Health to administer the Scheme.

Medicinal cannabis products remain prescription medicines, therefore placing prescribers as ‘gate-keepers’ to access for patients. The Scheme permits any medical practitioner to prescribe a medicinal cannabis product that meets the minimum quality standard. Other health practitioners, such as pharmacists and nurses, are also likely to be involved with the use of medicinal cannabis through activities such as dispensing, patient counselling, medicine education to patient and their whanau/family, medicines management and administration.

Through feedback from health practitioners, consumers and industry, the Ministry is aware that health practitioners do not have access to reliable information on medicinal cannabis. This includes clinical particulars (eg, possible indications, dosing, adverse effects, contraindications, precautions, drug interactions and safety), pharmacology and product specific information. Without reliable access to trusted sources of information, there is a significant barrier for health practitioners to discuss medicinal cannabis with their patients, and their whanau/family, and to make safe and effective clinical decisions. Patients have also indicated the difficulties they have had in discussing the option of medicinal cannabis with their healthcare professional, due to a lack of clinical knowledge.

As part of the Agency’s strategy to address these concerns, it is proposed that an educational resource be developed to provide some basic information, as a primer, to health practitioners. This resource will assist health practitioners in their understanding of medicinal cannabis. Development will be led by the Ministry and the final publication will be owned by the Ministry. The product will be free to access.

This educational resource will supplement other initiatives under way by the Agency to provide information to health practitioners, such as the development of a website which will contain links to other authoritative sources of information, including clinical guidelines produced by overseas regulators.

## Capability required

The Successful Respondent will be qualified to evaluate the available information and to write content based on this for a range of New Zealand health practitioners. Pre-existing subject matter expertise is strongly preferred to support timely development of the content. This may be achieved through the respondent using local and international expertise.

The Successful respondent must have an understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand bicultural heritage, te Tiriti o Waitangi articles and implications for health care and delivery in the health system.

### Capacity required

The successful respondent must have capacity to develop the product within the agreed timeframes. There must be flexibility to allow for a thorough and concise peer review to ensure the final product is adequate and trusted. The successful respondent may be required for additional work during the Ministry's review process.

### Key Requirements

1. The Ministry requires the development of peer reviewed content for an educational resource on medicinal cannabis for a range of health practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand's health system.
2. The content must be objective and targeted to health practitioners. All content developed must be drawn from reliable and trusted sources. Information must not be reflective of unsupported and personal opinions on medicinal cannabis.
3. The content must be relevant to New Zealand's health system, taking into account the range of different health practitioners and New Zealand's diverse environment.
4. Respondents should indicate general areas of information they propose to cover.
5. The content must be appropriate for an electronic format and be easily accessible, readable and understandable by health practitioners.
6. The content should be of a length that ensures it can be easily read and navigated by any healthcare professional. It is key that the information is concise and can be used by health practitioners at any time as a reference.
7. The content must be developed within the agreed timeframes for the agreed price. During the review period, changes to the content may be required. It is expected that the successful respondent will be responsible for implementing these changes where appropriate.
8. The content may be peer reviewed as part of the development process; however, the Ministry will also undertake its own review process with possible external consultation prior to publication.

The Ministry is aware that guidance produced by overseas regulators, such as Canada and Australia, includes clinical guidelines on specific indications. Development of these guidelines required an expert panel and/or significant consultation and review by subject matter experts. We do not expect this process to be repeated in New Zealand for this project as the intent of the product is to be an educational reference source, rather than a set of clinical guidelines.

### Key deliverables

1. Outline of proposed content
2. First draft of content prior to any review
3. Final draft of content

## **Additional information**

- Decisions on final content will be made by the Ministry and the final product will be owned by the Ministry.
- The Ministry will be responsible for editing, publishing and distribution of the product.
- Respondents with expertise and knowledge in the use of medicinal cannabis will be strongly preferred.
- The Ministry has resource to assist with the content development process and provide information on the Medicinal Cannabis Scheme.
- The Ministry's preferred format is an e-book style document. The Ministry is also interested in other innovative electronic media.
- The Ministry may seek review from and support for this resource from other professional organisations.
- The Ministry will be responsible for the formatting and publication of the resource; however, the content producer should be familiar with the Ministry of Health's communication standards.
- The total funding available is \$50,000, please ensure your quote is within this.

## **Submission of proposals**

Proposals should clearly describe the following:

- Outline or description of the content for the resource
- Methodology for development, including a description of the peer review process
- An estimate of the cost of producing the resource
- Timeframes for key milestones and deliverables

Proposals should include:

- Respondent credentials
- The credentials of anyone involved in peer review.

Please send your completed proposals to [jared.solloway@health.govt.nz](mailto:jared.solloway@health.govt.nz) by 13 November 2020.