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CONSUMER GROUP WELCOMES BOOST FOR MEDICINES

The Access to Medicines coalition (ATM) a consumer group representing 26 non-governmental organisations has welcomed the announcement of an additional \$185.7 million dollars for medicines in this year's Budget.

John Forman, spokesperson for the ATM coalition says the government is “delivering on it's promise to improve New Zealanders' access to the essential medicines they need by the delivery of an extra \$139 million to the DHBs for drugs. We're now looking to the government for clarification on exactly what is covered by the new subsidised medicines funding and how much the actual increase for the community medicines that are managed by PHARMAC will be.”

Health Minister Tony Ryall's description of “better, faster, more convenient health services” is good news for the ATM coalition. Forman states “We believe the government has a responsibility to all New Zealanders to operate an equitable pharmaceutical funding system that places health outcomes as its primary priority. This year's 'back-to-basics Budget' has recognised the necessity of providing medicines to our communities.

We are also very pleased with today's announcement of a review panel to report on improving access to high cost medicines. We hope to see further progress in medicine policy and funding decisions to increase the health, wellbeing and quality of life of individuals, their families and communities. “

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