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Medical cannabis alternative will provide choice to a NZ patient in need

Auckland, New Zealand - Medical Cannabis Awareness New Zealand (MCANZ) today welcomed the New Zealand Government's approval of a third application for a non-registered cannabis-based product, which will provide better access and choice to a local patient.

Shane Le Brun, Coordinator of MCANZ, said the success of this application is the first victory of its kind for MCANZ: "We have been advocating on behalf of several patients in New Zealand, highlighting the importance of timely access to safe and cost effective medical cannabis treatments. The approval of this application demonstrates that the New Zealand Government has acknowledged this alternative treatment and is listening to its constituency."

The medical cannabis product will be supplied by Tilray, a global leader in medical cannabis research and production. As one of the largest and most sophisticated producers of pharmaceutical-grade medical cannabis in the world, Tilray supplies products to health practitioners, patients, pharmacies and researchers in Australia, Canada, and the European Union, in accordance with local laws and regulations.

"Tilray supports any measure that allows patients to legally and responsibly access medical cannabis treatments. We welcome the New Zealand Government's approval of the application, and see it as a positive step towards assisting with improving patients' quality of life," Brendan Kennedy, President of Tilray said.

Tim Drury, Tilray's Australian Director further commented: "We are dedicated to providing safe, consistent and reliable therapy to patients in a timeframe that matters. In Australia, Tilray is pleased to have the opportunity to supply several patients with medical cannabis products through the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Special Access Scheme. The approval of this application will enable access for a qualified patient in New Zealand."

The recipient of the approval is Dr Huhana Hickey, a senior lecturer at Auckland University of Technology and an Order of Merit recipient, who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis and has been prescribed medical cannabis. "The challenge for me and many others is the affordability and access to a variety of products."

In addition to the approval for Dr. Hickey, there is already another medical cannabis application being processed at the Ministry for another patient, Grace Yeats, thanks to the advocacy performed by MCANZ. Grace is a teenager who is currently being treated with medical cannabis.

Tracy Yeats, Grace's mother, also highlighted the financial and timely pressures of getting access to medical cannabis treatments.

"My daughter Grace has a very rare and complicated condition which has been extremely difficult to manage from day one. We are relieved that there is another medical cannabis product available to patients like Grace. Allowing patients, specialists and other health professionals to have access to a variety of medical cannabis products will help to improve choice and potentially alleviate costs."

Mr Le Brun is optimistic about the future of medical cannabis in New Zealand: "This positive outcome demonstrates the progressive approach the New Zealand Government is taking towards medical cannabis. We hope that our advocacy efforts can pave the way for many other patients and their families to gain legal, timely access to cost effective treatments."

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About MCANZ

MCANZ is run by a group of highly passionate, rational people with a very personal stake in the need for Medical Cannabis in New Zealand. The Registered charity's key mission is to fundraise for patients already prescribed MC legally, assist patients and their specialists in applying for more appropriate products, providing recognised Medical Cannabis Training for the medical Profession, and to promote the cultivation, research and development of Medical Cannabis products in New Zealand. MCANZ is focused on applying positive pressure by highlighting the plight of patients for whom the only approved product Sativex is effectively unobtainable, due to barriers in prescribing and exorbitant costs. The charity's slogan is 'putting patients before politics', with the key goal of helping others get access to Medical Cannabis through legal means despite the current laws and government stance being decoupled from the evolving progress around Medical Cannabis globally.

Donations to MCANZ can be made at www.Givealittle.co.nz and also through the smart phone app *Easy Giving*.

Visit www.mcawenessnz.org for more information or contact MCANZ Coordinator Shane Le Brun on 021 245 6601 or shane@mcanz.org.nz

About Tilray

Tilray is a global leader in medical cannabis research and production dedicated to advancing the science and safety of cannabinoid medicine for patients with a diverse range of conditions. The company operates one of the largest and most sophisticated federally legal medical cannabis cultivation centers in the world – a state-of-the-art, 60,000 sq. ft., \$26 million facility in Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada.