



# HOW ARE FUNDING DECISIONS MADE FOR HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES IN SINGAPORE?

## AGENCY FOR CARE EFFECTIVENESS

The Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE) is the national health technology assessment (HTA) agency in Singapore. ACE assesses the **effectiveness, safety, and value** of health technologies (such as drugs, vaccines, and medical devices) by reviewing clinical and economic evidence, negotiating prices with companies, and seeking expert views from clinicians and patients. The Ministry of Health (MOH) advisory committees use ACE's evaluations to inform their **funding recommendations**.



## MINISTRY OF HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEES

There are two MOH advisory committees:

- The **Drug Advisory Committee (DAC)** makes funding recommendations for drugs, vaccines, and gene therapies
- The **Medical Technology Advisory Committee (MTAC)** makes funding recommendations for medical technologies including devices, diagnostics, and medical services

Committee members have a range of experience and include clinicians, pharmacists and experts in regulatory affairs, healthcare finance, and healthcare services.



## DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA

The MOH advisory committees provide recommendations to MOH about which health technologies should be subsidised in the public healthcare institutions, or funded under MediShield Life to ensure that patients have access to effective and affordable treatments. Funding recommendations are made in line with decision-making criteria which both DAC and MTAC follow. Other factors such as social, cultural, and ethical issues may also be considered.

### 1 CLINICAL NEED OF PATIENTS

The health technology should **address an unmet medical need** of patients.

The committees assess this need by asking questions such as:

- How many people in Singapore have this condition?
- How does this condition affect patients? Does it significantly impact a patient's daily activities?
- What health technologies are already available to manage this condition?
- What are the benefits and disadvantages of the available health technologies? Are these options affordable for patients?
- How will the health technology change clinical practice?

### 2 CLINICAL EFFECTIVENESS AND SAFETY

The health technology should be **effective and safe** for managing the health condition. The committees will consider questions such as:

- Is the health technology more effective or safer than alternative treatment options? Are the benefits of the health technology important to patients?
- What is the quality of the clinical evidence for the health technology? Is the evidence strong or weak? How confident are we that the benefits of the health technology seen in the evidence are likely to be realised by patients in local clinical practice?
- How relevant are the clinical trial results to patients in Singapore?

### 3 VALUE FOR MONEY (COST-EFFECTIVENESS)

New or expensive health technologies may not be as good as older subsidised options. The committees assess the **value for money** of a health technology by comparing its **additional benefit and cost** with alternative technologies that are already being used in local clinical practice. Compared with available alternatives, does the health technology:

- Cost less with the same or more benefit? → Good value for money
- Cost less with less benefit? → May be good value for money depending on the clinical need for additional treatment options
- Cost more with more benefit? → May be good value for money depending on how much more benefit it provides compared to alternatives
- Cost more with less benefit? → Poor value for money

### 4 BUDGET IMPACT

The **cost to the healthcare system** (including the government, patients, and insurance providers) to fund the health technology should be reasonable. The committees will determine this by considering:

- How many patients will need the health technology?
- What are the out-of-pocket costs that patients will have if the health technology is funded or not funded?
- Are there any specific groups of people for whom the technology provides the best value for money?
- What could be gained if the funds were spent on other healthcare services instead?

### 5 ORGANISATIONAL FEASIBILITY

MTAC also assesses the **potential impact** on the healthcare system if the health technology is used in clinical practice by asking questions such as:

- Is additional staff training needed to use the health technology?
- Do existing systems or protocols need to be amended?
- What impact might the changes needed to use the health technology have on available resources?

## RECOMMENDED

Health technology is **likely** to be considered suitable for funding if:

- ✓ There is a high clinical need
- ✓ There is a lack of affordable and effective alternatives
- ✓ There is clear evidence that it is clinically effective and safe
- ✓ It provides good value for money compared to existing alternatives at the price proposed by the company
- ✓ The annual cost to the healthcare system is reasonable if the health technology is funded

## NOT RECOMMENDED

Health technology is **unlikely** to be considered suitable for funding if:

- ✗ There is a low clinical need
- ✗ Affordable and effective alternatives are available
- ✗ The Committee has assessed that the health technology is not more clinically effective than alternatives
- ✗ The additional cost of the health technology over existing alternatives does not justify its benefits at the price proposed by the company
- ✗ The annual cost to the healthcare system to fund the health technology is unreasonable

**Government funding makes health technologies more affordable for patients. Talk to your doctor to find out if there are funded health technologies for your condition and if they are suitable for you.**



## Sources

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3. Ministry of Health, Singapore. List of Subsidised Drugs.
4. Ministry of Health, Singapore. Subsidised Vaccine List.
5. Ministry of Health, Singapore. Cancer Drug List.
6. Ministry of Health, Singapore. Medical Technology Subsidy List.



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