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**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Government Subsidises New Drugs on the PBS**

The Government will subsidise new drugs on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from today and several other drugs, already listed on the PBS, will become available in new forms.

The new drugs include: sunitinib for the treatment of renal cell carcinoma (a form of kidney cancer); Lanthanum carbonate hydrate for patients with an elevated level of phosphate in the blood associated with chronic renal disease; and teriparatide used in the treatment of osteoporosis.

The listing of new forms of drugs already available on the PBS will bring convenience to patients being treated for a variety of cancers and for those suffering disabling pain, managing cystic fibrosis, or requiring dialysis.

About 650 people will begin using sunitinib for the treatment of renal cell carcinoma in the first full year of listing. The listing of sunitinib will add around \$131.0 million to PBS and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme costs over the next four years.

Lanthanum carbonate hydrate is used in the treatment of patients with chronic kidney disease who require dialysis. This listing provides another non-calcium option for the treatment of hyperphosphatemia in these patients. Hyperphosphatemia is an electrolyte disturbance associated with chronic renal disease in which there is an abnormally elevated level of phosphate in the blood. There are no expected cost implications for the PBS, as this medication will be a substitute for other PBS medications.

About 2,500 patients will benefit in the next few years from the listing of teriparatide, a new drug for treatment of people with severe established osteoporosis. The Government recognises that there is established clinical need in a small number of people who continue to have minimal trauma fractures in spite of 12 month's therapy with a currently listed anti-resorptive agent (such as alendronate, risedronate sodium, ibandronic acid) or who are unable to be prescribed anti-resorptive therapy.

Patients with severe chronic pain or severe pain associated with cancer will be provided with alternative new forms of hydromorphone hydrochloride that have longer duration of action than the currently listed tablets. This is a strong narcotic, similar to oxycodone and morphine. It is listed for chronic severe disabling pain that does not respond to non-narcotic analgesics.

Nab-paclitaxel provides another option for treatment of metastatic breast cancer after failure of prior therapy that included an anthracycline. Nab-paclitaxel is an alternative formulation of paclitaxel which requires less time for infusion. About 800 people are diagnosed each year with metastatic breast cancer.

There will be no additional cost to the PBS due the listing of hydromorphone hydrochloride and nab-paclitaxel, as they will substitute for other PBS medications.

Patients with cystic fibrosis will benefit from the listing of pancreatic extract in Creon capsules. Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease that affects a number of organs in the body (especially the lungs and pancreas) by reducing the body's ability to clear mucus. Creon capsules contain a higher dose of pancreatic extract than those currently listed on the PBS. The new listing on the PBS is expected to reduce the number of capsules patients require per day to replace the enzymes from the pancreas that they need to digest food.

Listing of this drug will not have any significant cost implications for the PBS.

Alternatives will be made available for two intravenous infusion compounds currently listed on the PBS. The alternatives are sodium lactate to manage electrolyte balance and irinotecan hydrochloride trihydrate to treat metastatic colorectal cancer. Neither is expected to have a cost impact on the PBS.

Information about medicines subsidised by the Australian Government through the PBS is available at [www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au)

**For all media inquiries, please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220.**