



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

15 April 2018

Listing of life-saving cancer medicine to save patients more than \$200,000

The Turnbull Government will drastically reduce the cost of a life-saving new medicine, which uses a patient's own immune system to track down and destroy cancer cells.

From 1 May, classical Hodgkin's lymphoma patients will no longer pay over \$200,000 per course of treatment, now only paying a maximum of \$39.50 per script, with concessional patients—including pensioners—paying just \$6.40.

Keytruda[®] is an immunotherapy medicine, part of the next wave of medical breakthroughs, working with a patient's own immune system to recognise cancer cells and destroy them.

More than 120 Australians with classical Hodgkin's lymphoma will now access Keytruda each year at a drastically reduced cost.

This listing provides a new option for patients that cannot undergo, or have no response from, the normal chemotherapy treatment.

This medicine is already listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the treatment of unresectable Stage III or Stage IV malignant melanoma.

The Turnbull Government is committed to making these new life-changing immunotherapy medicines available for Australian patients, and has listed Opdivo[®], a \$1 billion drug to treat both locally advanced and metastatic stages of non-small cell lung cancer and a type of renal cell cancer.

We have also made Yervoy[®] available for the treatment of unresectable Stage II or Stage IV malignant melanoma.

Also on May 1, we will make other medicines available to treat a range of conditions, including non-small cell lung cancer, epilepsy and ulcerative colitis.

Giotrif[®] will be made available for over 220 people each year to treat advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer. This medicine would otherwise cost patients over \$33,550 per year.

Briviact[®], an anti convulsant agent, will provide a new treatment option for patients with epilepsy. This will mean around 1,800 patients each year will save over \$1,000.

Amino Acid Formula supplemented with Prebiotics, Probiotics and Long Chain Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (Neocate[®] Syneo[™]) is a medicinal food that provides a new treatment option for infants (up to 24 months) with life altering food intolerances. It is expected over 2000 infants could benefit from this listing.

And Colazide[®] an intestinal anti-inflammatory agent will now be available with a larger maximum quantity on prescription meaning that patients will need to fill fewer prescriptions. Over 2000 patients could benefit from this listing.

The independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended each of these listings.

The Committee is by law and in practice, independent of Government in its deliberations. By law the Federal Government cannot list a new medicine without a positive recommendation from PBAC.

Since coming into Government, the Coalition has helped improve the health of Australians by subsidising more than \$8.2 billion worth of new medicines.

Unlike Labor, we are subsidising all drugs recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

Labor delayed the listing of seven vital drugs – leaving important medicines out of reach for many Australian patients.

Our commitment to the PBS is rock solid. Together with Medicare, it is a foundation of our world-class health care system.

PBS listings are published on the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits, which is available through the PBS website at www.pbs.gov.au.

(ENDS)