



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

30 November 2018

\$100 million investment in new PBS listings to fight cancer

Australians fighting cancer will benefit when five new cancer listings are made available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) following a \$100 million investment from the Liberal National Government.

From December 1, thousands of eligible patients with certain forms of leukaemia, advanced tumours of the intestine and pancreas, melanoma, bowel cancer and ovarian cancer will save up to \$100,000 a year.

When these important listings are subsidised under the PBS, patients will pay 39.50 per script or just \$6.40 a script concessional patients.

Almost 200 patients living with acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) – a rare but aggressive cancer of the blood and bone marrow – will now be able to access the \$30,000 per year medication Rydapt® (midostaurin).

AML is one of the most common acute leukaemia forms in adults with the highest incidence rates occurring in the US, Europe and Australia. It also has one of the lowest survival rates of all adult leukaemias.

Rydapt is an oral, targeted therapy that interrupts a cancer cells' ability to grow and multiply and will be made available for people with AML who have a specific genetic mutation called FLT3.

The current listing of Somatuline Autogel® (lanreotide) is being extended to include patients with non-functional gastroentero-pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours, which are advanced tumours of the intestine and pancreas.

Somatuline Autogel is used to control the growth of these advanced tumours of the intestine and pancreas. Around 760 patients per year will be able to access this medicine, which would cost \$23,000 a year without the PBS subsidy.

Opdivo® and Yervoy® (nivolumab and ipilimumab) are being listed on the PBS as a new combination treatment option for patients with unresectable malignant melanoma which are skin cancers that have spread locally and cannot be removed by surgery.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee considered there was a high unmet clinical need for this aggressive and debilitating condition and that combining these medicines may improve outcomes for some patients.

Currently, around 800 patients per year access ipilimumab on its own for this condition. This listing will mean these patients can access the combination treatment if their doctor believes it would be a more effective treatment option for them. It would cost over \$100,000 per course of treatment without subsidy.

Lonsurf[®] (trifluridine with tipiracil) is being listed on the PBS as a new treatment option for patients with bowel cancer that has spread to other parts of the body.

Lonsurf works by slowing down the growth and spread of cancer cells. Around 885 patients per year will be able to access this medicine, which would cost \$6,000 a year for some patients without the PBS subsidy.

Lynparza[®] (olaparib) for high grade serous ovarian, fallopian tube and primary peritoneal cancer – a cancer that has very low survival rates – is being amended to also allow for subsidy of a new tablet that significantly reduces the pill burden compared to the current capsule listing. Patients will now be able to take four tablets per day instead of 16 capsules per day.

Lynparza inhibits the growth and spread of cancer cells in the body and is currently used by more than 200 women per year. Without PBS subsidy this medicine would otherwise cost around \$90,000 per year.

All these medication will now cost eligible patients the maximum PBS price of just \$39.50 per script, with concessional patients, including pensioners, paying just \$6.40 a script.

These new and amended PBS listings were all recommended by the independent expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

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

Unlike Labor, we are subsidising all drugs recommended by the independent medical experts.

In the Budget we announced our commitment to invest \$2.4 billion in new medicines to build on our commitment to guarantee those essential services that all Australians rely on.

Our Government's strong economic management means we are providing Australian patients with access to life-saving and life-changing medicines quicker than ever before.

We are now making on average one new or amended PBS listing every single day. Only the Coalition can be trusted to deliver for Australian patients.

Since coming into Government, the Coalition has helped improve the health of Australians by subsidising around \$10 billion worth of new medicines.

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

(ENDS)

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Somerville, Victoria.