



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

18 July 2018

\$50 million to provide life-saving support to cancer patients

The Turnbull Government will provide \$50 million to support some of Australia's sickest patients, battling the most aggressive and deadliest cancers, to access potentially life-saving medical treatment.

The new national program - The Australian Genomic Cancer Medicine Program - will treat more than 5,000 patients nationally, from every state and territory.

I want to thank and acknowledge the support and strong advocacy of the program by Senator Stirling Griff, Centre Alliance, Senator for South Australia.

The program will be open for patients with rare cancers and advanced stage cancers, who have little or no treatment options left. These include patients with ovarian cancer, pancreatic cancer, thyroid cancer, renal cell cancer and sarcomas.

Each patient will have their cancer individually tested through what is known as genomic sequencing.

This new type of medical treatment works by looking deep into each patient's cancerous cells, analysing their DNA to work out how to target and destroy the cancer.

The result is tailored treatment based on the individual circumstances of the patient. This means we can find out what medicine might work for a particular cancer and then get it to the patient.

Genomic testing will transform prevention, prediction, diagnosis and treatment of disease. It provides precision medical care, targeting the unique genetic make-up of individuals.

This is world-leading treatment and means each patient gets treated for their own individual cancer in their own home state or territory.

This will save lives and protect some of our sickest Australians.

And it will extend the lives of so many more, offering hope and delivering more time for so many families.

The Australian Genomic Cancer Medicine Program brings together Australia's eight major cancer centres and three leading research institutes, including the Garvan Institute and Kinghorn Cancer Centre in Sydney, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and Peter Mac in Melbourne and the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

As well as the Canberra Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, Royal Darwin Hospital, Royal Hobart Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth.

We are also partnering with the National Health and Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Centre.

Importantly this now means, every patient will be able to access this trial in their own state or territory, eliminating the need to travel across Australia for support.

The first clinical trials are expected to be held early next year.

In developing the trials, AGCMP will work with the pharmaceutical industry, the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

This means that the trials will be able to provide the right evidence to support Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listing of the drugs being tested – this means thousands of other patients will be able to benefit from this trial.

The AGCMP will build on the Garvan Institute's Genomic Cancer Medicine Program. This program has already given more than 600 Australians with incurable cancers new hope with access to new or re-purposed drugs, via small-scale clinical trials.

The Turnbull Government's \$50 million contribution to the program brings the total commitment to \$160 million over five years.

This investment is part of the Turnbull Government's unprecedented commitment to health and medical research.

The \$1.3 billion National Health and Medical Industry Growth Plan, announced in this year's Budget, includes a flagship \$500 million, 10 year commitment to the Genomics Health Futures Mission.

(ENDS)

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