



THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

1 July 2015

New breast & lung cancer drugs available from today

Breast and Lung Cancer patients will have affordable access to life-changing medicines that normally cost up to \$80,000 for treatment from today, Minister for Health Sussan Ley has announced.

Ms Ley said that from July 1 2015, patients will now pay just \$6.10 (concessional) or \$37.70 (general) for breakthrough lung cancer medicine *Crizotinib* and breast cancer treatments *Perjeta*, *Herceptin* and *Kadcyla* as a result of their official listing on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme today.

Ms Ley said taxpayers would invest over a quarter-of-a-billion dollars in listing the new drugs and was another example of the Abbott Government delivering on its promise to list new medicines as quickly as possible.

“Access to new medicines is crucial if we’re to help Australians beat life-threatening diseases such as cancer, as well as overcome chronic and degenerative conditions that can rob them of their independence,” Ms Ley said.

“This investment will deliver affordable access to patients who would otherwise pay up to \$80,000 for these life-saving treatments to beat breast and lung cancers.

“In fact, the Abbott Government has already listed double the number of drugs compared to Labor’s last term in office and in half the time, and that investment is only going to continue to grow.

“One in every six dollars out of the \$10 billion taxpayers invest in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme every year is now spent on cancer treatments.”

Ms Ley said the Abbott Government has now more-than-doubled the number of new and amended drug listings on the PBS to over 660 – worth almost \$3 billion in total since September 2013 – when compared to Labor’s 331 listings during their last three-year term in office

Ms Ley said today’s announcement also demonstrated the importance of the Abbott Government’s PBS Reform Package, which recently passed the Senate.

“Access to new medicines is crucial if we’re to help Australians beat life-threatening diseases such as cancer, as well as overcome chronic and degenerative conditions that can rob them of their independence,” Ms Ley said.

“However, meeting community expectations that new drugs will be listed quickly also comes at a significant cost, with taxpayers expected to invest \$50 billion making medicines more affordable for patients over the next five years alone.

“Our PBS reform package ensures spending on existing medicines is as efficient as possible so we can continue to list new breakthrough drugs such as these as well.”

Ms Ley said *Perjeta*, *Herceptin* and *Kadcyla* were used to treat HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer and would benefit 590 patients per year. *Kadcyla* provides an additional line of therapy where the disease has progressed despite previous treatment, while the combination of *Perjeta* and *Herceptin* would provide a more effective treatment option for this cancer than *Herceptin* alone.

Ms Ley said *Crizotinib (Xalkori®)* was used to treat anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK)-positive non-small cell lung cancer and would benefit approximately 154 patients with the rare life-threatening disease.

Crizotinib will be listed through a Managed Entry Scheme that will speed up access for patients with the highest need for treatment.

“There are very few effective therapeutic options available for patients diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer and this will be the first treatment available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme that specifically targets patients with ALK gene rearrangement,” Ms Ley said.

Ms Ley said that, without taxpayer subsidisation via the PBS, breast cancer drugs *Perjeta*, *Herceptin* and *Kadcyla* and lung cancer drug *Crizotinib (Xalkori®)* would cost \$80,000 and \$82,000 per patient respectively.

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