



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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Delivering affordable access to vital new multiple sclerosis treatment

More than 5,000 Australians every year who suffer from relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis will benefit from affordable access to a major new life-changing medicine from today.

It's part of the Turnbull Government's rock solid commitment to guaranteeing Medicare – which includes ensuring Australian patients have access to medicines when they need it.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disease that affects the central nervous system. Symptoms include visual disturbance, fatigue, pain, reduced mobility and coordination, cognitive impairment and mood changes.

Relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS) is the most common form of MS and is characterised by partial or total recovery between flares.

Ocrelizumab (Ocrevus®) decreases the number of flare-ups and slows the worsening of RRMS. This results in a significant improvement in quality of life for sufferers.

Without subsidised access, patients would pay around \$35,100 per year for this medicine. Now, it will be available for a maximum of \$39.50 per script, or for just \$6.40 for concessional patients.

Many MS sufferers will have access to a vital medicine that until now has been out of reach.

The independent expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommended listing ocrelizumab as an additional treatment option for patients with RRMS, noting that it is a first-in-class medicine among treatments for MS currently listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Since coming into Government, the Coalition has helped to improve the lives of Australians by providing affordable access to around \$8.1 billion worth of medicines.

Unlike Labor, we are subsidising all drugs recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. Labor delayed the listing of seven vital drugs – which left important medicines out of reach for many Australian patients.

Australia's PBS is one of the foundations of our universal health care system and is the envy of many countries. Together with Medicare, it is a foundation of our world-class health care system.

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