



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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Medicines for severe asthma and growth hormone deficiency listed on the PBS

The Liberal National Government will list new medicines for severe asthma, and severe growth hormone deficiency on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), saving patients up to \$21,000 a year.

From today Fasenra® (benralizumab), a new treatment option for patients with uncontrolled severe eosinophilic asthma, will be available on the PBS.

Around 670 patients a year will now be able to access this medicine, which would cost more than \$21,000 per year of treatment without the PBS subsidy. When this medicine is subsidised under the PBS, patients will pay 39.50 per script or just \$6.40 a script for concessional patients.

Severe eosinophilic asthma is a condition where there are too many eosinophils (a type of white blood cell) in the airways, which can worsen asthma, or increase the number of asthma flare-ups a person suffers.

Fasenra works to reduce the levels of eosinophils in the blood and airways, and the number of ongoing maintenance injections required to control asthma is reduced to every eight weeks, rather than once a month in comparison with existing PBS listed therapies.

Uncontrolled severe asthma can be debilitating and in some circumstances life threatening. It is estimated that 2.5 million Australians live with asthma, with up to 10 per cent suffering from severe asthma.

Those with the condition face regular flare ups, increased hospitalisations and chronic exposure to oral corticosteroids — all of which affect their overall health and quality of life.

Most people with asthma can manage their symptoms with regular use of their inhalers. However, with uncontrolled severe asthma more medications are often needed.

Despite their best efforts, it is estimated that up to 30 per cent of people living with uncontrolled severe asthma do not find standard treatments effective, even with high doses of standard-of-care inhaled asthma medicines. For these people, the listing of this medication could offer a new treatment option.

I am also pleased to announce that the current listing of Genotropin® and Genotropin GoQuick® (somatropin) will be extended to include eligible adults. It is currently only available for children through the PBS.

This medicine will help people with severe growth hormone deficiency, whose quality of life has been significantly affected by their condition.

People suffering from this condition don't produce enough natural growth hormone. Genotropin and Genotropin GoQuick works to stimulate body growth and regulate their metabolism.

Around 780 patients per year will now be able to access this medicine which would otherwise cost over \$10,000 for a year of treatment.

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

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 the 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.