



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

25 July 2018

### **Young cancer patients to access new treatments**

Hundreds of young Australians with rare and aggressive forms of cancer will now access four new clinical trials from September, providing ground-breaking treatment and therapy options to patients.

The Turnbull Government is providing CanTeen with \$3.6 million to run four clinical trials which will support 260 patients with very rare and highly lethal cancers.

These patients will be between 15–25 years old and battling against brain cancer, acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and bone cancer.

Too many young people are dying from rare cancers and my hope is that these trials will deliver new treatment options, making a difference to some of our sickest Australians.

Four world renowned Australian medical institutions will each conduct a trial—Royal North Shore Hospital, Cooperative Trials Group for Neuro-Oncology (COGNO) at the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre, the Garvan Institute and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne.

The trial to be run by the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre will focus on Ewing Sarcoma which is a highly lethal and rare cancer of the bone and soft tissue that commonly affects adolescents and young people.

Ewing Sarcoma is one of the top 10 most common cancers for 15-24 year olds with 86 new cases diagnosed between 2010 and 2014.

The trial will involve around 30 patients and will focus on providing young people who have had a recurrence of their cancer the opportunity to take part in a clinical trial to access specialised treatment through medical teams that are experts in treating sarcoma.

The four trials will create new opportunities for young cancer patients to get involved and gain access to the latest research into highly lethal cancers which are more common in younger age groups.

The TeenCancer program will improve therapy, treatment and outcomes for young Australians with cancer.

The Turnbull Government is also providing CanTeen's Online Support Platform with a further \$1.4 million over the next two years.

The Platform provides professional counselling services every day of the week and access to 24/7 peer support where young people living with cancer can connect with each other through forums, blogs, video stories and direct messaging.

It also provides patients with information on the different types of cancer and the available treatments, and importantly, coping strategies for themselves and their families—around 3,000 young Australians have already connected with the Platform.

We are also providing over \$47 million to CanTeen over three phases to operate the National Youth Cancer Services.

The Program works by:

- assisting multidisciplinary teams to provide information and support to young people living with cancer and link them with appropriate services;
- providing facilities for treatment and support for young people, including social and emotional support; and
- facilitating participation in clinical trials to assess new cancer technologies.

The Turnbull Government recognises that clinical trials are crucial to delivering better health outcomes to patients.

Medical research both saves lives and protects lives.

In the Budget, we announced \$6 billion in record funding for Australia's health and medical research sector, including \$3.5 billion for the National Health and Medical Research Council, \$2 billion in disbursements from the Medical Research Future Fund and \$500 million from the Biomedical Translation Fund.

We also announced that we will provide \$248 million to support clinical trial activity through the highly successful rare cancer, rare diseases and unmet need clinical trials and registries program.

(ENDS)

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