



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

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Millions of Australians set to benefit from new and cheaper medicines

Going to the pharmacy is set to be cheaper from next month, with the cost of more than 1100 medicine brands being reduced and with vital new drugs being added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The Turnbull Government is committed to making medicines available and more affordable for all Australians. We have a rock solid commitment to Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

From 1 April, millions of Australians suffering from a range of health conditions will benefit when more than 1,100 medicine brands listed on the PBS drop in price.

People with conditions including high cholesterol, Parkinson's disease, depression, breast cancer, eczema and psoriasis will pay less for their medicines.

As an example, 467,000 Australians using rosuvastatin for high cholesterol will save 22% per script.

For the many Australians who take multiple medications daily, the savings will be considerable.

These reductions are expected to save Australian families \$135 million over the next four years and will also deliver estimated savings to taxpayers of \$455 million.

These savings are part of more than \$20 billion in savings estimated to be achieved by 2019-20, since PBS reforms began in 2007.

The Turnbull Government is also continuing to list all vital new drugs to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. Since coming into Government, we've added around \$5 billion worth of drugs to the PBS.

This means that drugs which may otherwise cost hundreds of thousands of dollars will be available for no more than \$38.80 per script – or just \$6.30 for concession card holders.

From 1 April, new treatments for two rare cancers, Hodgkin Lymphoma, and an advanced type of skin cancer, will be available through the PBS. Some of the other listings include treatments for psoriasis, arthritis, schizophrenia and iron deficiency.

PBS listing of brentuximab vedotin (marketed as Adcetris®) and vismodegib (Erivedge®) will save eligible cancer patients between \$7,400 and \$16,100 for a course of treatment.

Adcetris is well tolerated by Hodgkin Lymphoma patients and offers better outcomes to two groups of patients.

These are 39 patients a year on average with relapsed or refractory Hodgkin Lymphoma following autologous stem cell transplantation, and around 97 a year on average who have not undergone transplantation.

Adcetris works by targeting certain cancer cells, and is therefore less toxic than traditional chemotherapy.

Erivedge, also listed from 1 April, is used to treat skin cancer, specifically metastatic or locally advanced basal cell carcinoma (BCC).

BCC represents the majority of non-melanoma skin cancers. In most cases, it can be cured by early treatment, but in rare cases the cancer progresses to a point where surgery and radiotherapy are no longer appropriate.

As a result, there is a high clinical need for a new non-surgical treatment for advanced BCC.

Around 113 Australians a year will now have affordable access to Erivedge, which would otherwise cost \$7,448 for a course of treatment.

Brenzys®, a biosimilar brand of the drug etanercept and a biological disease modifying anti-rheumatic drug (bDMARD), is also being listed in April for a range of conditions.

Australia's PBS is one of the foundations of our universal health care system, which is the envy of most nations.

The Turnbull Government's careful management of PBS spending means that we are able to list new, effective medicines to the PBS when they become available.

In 2015-16, we provided \$10.8 billion to the PBS — \$7.6 billion for the products, and \$3.2 billion to supply them through wholesalers, pharmacies and hospitals.

Part of our rock solid commitment to Medicare is ensuring people have access to medicine when they need it. We are delivering on this commitment.

(ENDS)

New and expanded listings on the PBS:

Medicine	Indication, condition and treatment	Impact on patients / Budget
<p>Brentuximab vedotin <i>Bren-TUX-i-mab-ve-DOE-tin</i> (Adcetris®)</p> <p>Expanded</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of relapsed or refractory Hodgkin lymphoma for patients who were autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT) naïve.</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Brentuximab vedotin is designed to work differently to traditional chemotherapy. Traditional chemotherapy enters the blood and kills both cancer cells and healthy cells that divide rapidly. Brentuximab vedotin is made up of a monoclonal antibody linked to a substance intended to kill cancer cells. This substance is delivered to cancer cells by the monoclonal antibody.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$16,159 per course of treatment without subsidised access through the PBS.</p> <p>An average of 97 patients per year (for six years) could benefit from this listing.</p> <p>This listing provides improved quality of life for patients with this condition and can provide a bridge to transplant.</p>
<p>Brentuximab vedotin <i>Bren-TUX-i-mab-ve-DOE-tin</i></p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of patients with relapsed or refractory CD30+ Hodgkin lymphoma following autologous stem cell transplant (ASCT) experienced.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$16,160 per course of treatment without subsidised access through the PBS.</p>

<p>(Adcetris®)</p> <p>Expanded</p>	<p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Brentuximab vedotin is designed to work differently to traditional chemotherapy. Traditional chemotherapy enters the blood and kills both cancer cells and healthy cells that divide rapidly. Brentuximab vedotin is made up of a monoclonal antibody linked to a substance intended to kill cancer cells. This substance is delivered to cancer cells by the monoclonal antibody.</p>	<p>An average of 39 patients per year (for six years) could benefit from this listing.</p> <p>This listing provides improved quality of life for patients with this condition.</p>
<p>Calcipotriol + Betamethasone Dipropionate <i>KAL-si-poe-TRYE-ol plus BAY-ta-METH-a-sona die-PRO-pee-oh-nate</i> (Enstilar®)</p> <p>New</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of patients with psoriasis.</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> The calcipotriol treats the overactive skin cells. The betamethasone dipropionate relieves redness, swelling, itching and irritation of the skin.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$91 per course of treatment without subsidised access through the PBS.</p> <p><i>Patient numbers are not available as this assessment is based on script volume.</i></p> <p>This listing provides another treatment option for patients with this condition.</p>
<p>Etanercept <i>E-tan'er-cept</i> (Brenzys®)</p> <p>New</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of patients with severe active rheumatoid arthritis, severe psoriatic arthritis, severe chronic plaque psoriasis, and ankylosing spondylitis.</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Relieves the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis and other inflammatory conditions.</p>	<p><i>Patients would access subsidised alternative brands of etanercept already listed on the PBS, i.e. at their relevant co-payment.</i></p> <p><i>Patient numbers are not available. Script volume remains unchanged.</i></p> <p>This listing provides a second biosimilar alternative for patients.</p>
<p>Ferrous fumarate, ferrous fumarate with folic acid</p> <p>New</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of iron deficiency and iron deficiency anaemias (for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people).</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Ferrous fumarate is an essential body mineral and works by providing iron to the body.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$300 annually without subsidised access through the PBS.</p> <p><i>Patient numbers are not available as this assessment is based on script volume.</i></p> <p>This listing addresses the high clinical need for these supplements in a small defined population</p>
<p>Glycomacropeptide formula with long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids and docosahexanoic acid and low pheny</p> <p>New</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of phenylketonuria</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Presents necessary protein in a form that can be utilised by patients with phenylketonuria.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$24,400 annually without subsidised access through the PBS.</p> <p>An average of 15 patients per year (for six years) could benefit from this listing.</p> <p>This listing provides another treatment option for patients with this condition.</p>
<p>Paliperidone <i>Pal-e-per'i-done</i> (Invega Trinza)</p> <p>New</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of patients with schizophrenia.</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Suppresses psychotic behaviour and stabilises moods.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$1,219 annually for this treatment without subsidised access through the PBS.</p> <p><i>Patient numbers are not available as this assessment is based on script volume.</i></p> <p>This listing improves access to treatment for patients as they will require one injection every three months instead of monthly.</p>
<p>Vemurafenib <i>VEM-ue-RAF-e-nib</i> (Zelboraf®)</p> <p>Cobimetinib <i>Koe-bi-ME-ti-nib</i> (Cotellic®)</p> <p>New</p>	<p><i>Indication:</i> For the treatment of patients with unresectable stage III or IV malignant melanoma.</p> <p><i>Therapeutic effect:</i> Selective mitogen-activated protein kinase (MEK) inhibitor that targets MEK1 and MEK2 tyrosine-threonine kinases and some mutated forms of BRAF resulting in greater tumour cell death and enhanced tumour responses than with the BRAF inhibitor vemurafenib alone.</p>	<p>Patients would pay around \$16,372 per course of treatment for this treatment without subsidised access through the PBS.</p> <p>An average of 271 patients per year (for six years) could benefit from this listing.</p> <p>This listing provides another treatment option for patients with this condition.</p>