

Australia offers new scheme for cancer & epilepsy patients

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Patients to avail a huge subsidy from Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on the drugs for many acute diseases



Australians with certain cancers and infants with severe epilepsy will benefit from new medications being listed or extended on the Australian Government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

From 1 August 2020, up to 130 Australians per year will benefit from the first time listing of Rozlytrek® (entrectinib). This medicine will be made available through the PBS for locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer patients with a c-ROS proto-oncogene 1 (ROS1) gene rearrangement.

This listing means that a treatment that might otherwise cost more than \$177,000 per course, will be made available to patients with this rare form of lung cancer for \$41 per script or \$6.60 with a concession card.

In addition, approximately 150 Australians per year will benefit from the first time listing of Lorviqua® (lorlatinib). This medicine treats metastatic anaplastic lymphoma kinase positive non-small cell lung cancer in patients who have disease progression following other treatment options.

Without PBS subsidy, patients might pay more than \$59,000 per course of treatment.

Diacomit® (stiripentol) will list for the first time for the treatment of severe myoclonic epilepsy in infancy (also known as Dravet syndrome).

Dravet syndrome is a rare and severe genetic epilepsy that begins during infancy. Diacomit is an add-on treatment for patients with Dravet syndrome that has not been adequately controlled by previous treatment. It is estimated that up to 90 patients may benefit from this listing each year, which may otherwise cost almost \$12,000 per year for treatment.

The Australian Government is also expanding the PBS listing of Lynparza® (olaparib) for the treatment of high-grade serous ovarian cancer, fallopian tube cancer and primary peritoneal cancer. Around 45 additional Australians per year will benefit from the broadening of the access criteria and the associated gene mutation testing requirements.

Patients might otherwise pay more than \$104,000 per course of treatment without subsidy. Each of these listings has been recommended by the independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

Since 2013, the Liberal National Government has listed over 2,400 new or amended listings on the PBS. This represents an average of around 30 listings or amendments per month – or one each day – at an overall investment by the Government of \$11.6 billion.