

Australia invests more than \$86M for better access to life saving medicines

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New medicines for Australians with multiple sclerosis, lymphoma, carcinoma and reproductive cancers



From 1 November, the Australian government will invest more than \$86 million over the next four years to provide greater access to life saving medicines for Australians living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), and various forms of cancer.

There is a high clinical need for effective treatments for patients with progressive forms of relapse onset multiple sclerosis.

Mayzent® (siponimod) will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the first time to treat those patients with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis.

Without PBS subsidy, these patients would pay more than \$25,000 per year for treatment with approximately 800 patients benefiting from this listing each year.

The PBS subsidy now means patients will only need to pay \$41 per prescription, or \$6.60 with a concession card.

In addition to this listing, Australians diagnosed with a rare type of lymphoma which affects the skin will receive subsidised access to a new medication and specialised treatment from 1 November 2020 through an investment of over \$11.5 million.

Uvadex® (methoxsalen) will be listed on the PBS for the first time for treatment of patients with erythrodermic cutaneous T-cell lymphoma who have not responded to other treatments.

Concurrently, two new items will be introduced on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) for the use of extracorporeal photopheresis (ECP) in combination with Uvadex® to treat the condition, as recommended by the Medical Services Advisory Committee.

Other PBS listings from 1 November — announced in the Budget 2020-21 — include the expanded listing of:

- Tecentriq® and Avastin® (atezolizumab and bevacizumab) for use in combination to treat patients with advanced unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma, the most common type of primary liver cancer. An average of 500 patients per

- year may benefit from this. They would normally pay up to \$170,000 for a course of treatment without PBS subsidy
- Lynparza® (olaparib) for the treatment of newly diagnosed advanced high grade epithelial ovarian, fallopian tube or primary peritoneal cancers. An average of 300 patients per year may benefit from this listing and would normally pay around \$140,500 per course of treatment for this medicine.