

Australia makes CAR-T cell therapy accessible for lymphoma patients

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Australians suffering from a rare type of blood cancer will now have access to a highly specialised CAR-T cell therapy, as the Morrison government continues to invest in medical breakthroughs and new therapies that save lives and improve lives.

Yescarta (axicabtagene ciloleucel) is a type of CAR-T cell therapy that is used to treat patients with certain types of lymphoma—a form of blood cancer.

As part of the National Health Reform Agreement, the government is ensuring more Australian patients can access Yescarta, a high cost and highly specialised therapy.

Yescarta is the second specially funded CAR-T therapy for patients with certain aggressive B-cell lymphomas, where initial treatments have been unsuccessful.

In this approach to treat certain aggressive B-cell lymphomas, cells from the patient's own immune system are collected, re-engineered and given back to the patient in a single infusion to kill cancer cells.

It is expected up to 300 Australians per year will benefit from access to these therapies, which are available at selected public hospitals.

All governments are expected to provide \$100 million for funding these therapies in 2021-22, with this cost to be shared equally between the Government and the States and Territories.