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ASIA EDITION

Australia reduces the cost of medicines through new PBS listings

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Australian Government is listing a number of new medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) to support thousands of Australians with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), high cholesterol and chronic migraine.

Australians patients with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) types 1, 2 or 3a who are aged 18 years or under when treatment begins will have subsidized access to Evrysdi® (risdiplam), which is being listed on the PBS for the first time.

Evrysdi® is an oral form of treatment for SMA. It is a less invasive treatment option for patients compared to spinal injections which may also reduce the frequency of visits to specialist hospitals. Without PBS subsidy, around 100 Australians a year will pay more than $123,000 for treatment.

Australians suffering from hypercholesterolaemia (elevation of cholesterol in the blood) will have access to a new treatment, Praluent® (alirocumab), which lowers cholesterol levels and can reduce a person's risk of a heart attack or stroke. The treatment will be available to Australians with severe forms of hypercholesterolaemia and without PBS subsidy, more than 20,000 Australians would pay around $6,500 per year for this treatment.

Also, being listed for the first time is Ajovy® (fremanezumab), which will be available to Australians with chronic migraine. Without PBS subsidy, around 10,000 Australians would pay around $6,700 per year for this new treatment. This follows a recent listing earlier this year by the Government of Emgality® (galcanezumab), which means Australians will now have a choice between two treatment options for chronic migraine.

Keytruda® (pembrolizumab) will be extended on the PBS for the treatment of Australians with colorectal cancer, a type of bowel cancer. These new listings with save Australians and their families thousands of dollars for these treatments, which will now only cost them $41.30 per script or just $6.60 if they have a concession card.

These listings has been recommended by the independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. Since 2013, the Coalition Government has approved more than 2,700 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 $13.5 billion.