



PATIENTS DENIED ACCESS TO NOVEL MEDICINES BY AUSTRALIA

An Outdated, Discriminatory System Leads to Lack of Access for Patients



In Australia, once a drug is approved as being safe and efficacious, it must undergo an additional health technology assessment (HTA) to determine whether it will be covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Australia conducts traditional cost-effectiveness assessments that rely on the Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) to decide whether new treatments have enough “value” to be covered. The QALY is known to discriminate against patients with chronic illnesses and people with disabilities. Australia’s HTA system was established in 1993, and it is widely acknowledged that it has not been updated to match the evolving landscape of novel medications. Patients experience extreme delays and lack of access to new therapies due to this discriminatory and outdated system.

Treatment for Debilitating Migraines not Available

Raphaella Kathryn Crosby lives with hemiplegic migraines, severe migraines that cause stroke-like symptoms. She had lived for 10 years without one migraine-free day, which limited her ability to work and made her reliant on home health aides. Adding two migraine drugs, Aimovig and Nurtec, to her regimen has drastically improved her quality of life, allowing her to work and take care of herself again. Unfortunately, Australia has not found these drugs to be worth their cost, so they are not included on the PBS and therefore not covered for Australians. Crosby has been advocating for the addition of migraine drugs to the PBS, arguing that the restrictions placed on them are not due to clinical science but on saving money in the short term.

Policymakers must reject pricing schemes modeled after foreign countries that would devalue and ration care for Americans.

More Info
www.pipccpatients.org

Patients with Rare Forms of Cancer are Unable to Access Needed Medicines

Thirty-three-year-old Tenielle Jordan was diagnosed with a rare type of bowel cancer in 2022. She underwent surgery and chemotherapy but within less than two years, the cancer was back and spreading. Patients like Jordan have few treatment options in Australia, because novel cancer therapies, like Keytruda, are restricted for rare and less common cancer types.

Patients with Rare Gene Mutations in Cystic Fibrosis Left Behind

In 2022, a game changing CF drug, ***Trikafta was added to the PBS.*** This was still three years later than it was available in the US, and it did not include access for patients with rare gene mutations, like ***Caitlin Magagna.*** Magagna has waited for years for a treatment that would allow the 25-year-old to live independently and hold down a job. She has called on the PBS to add vital medications in a more timely manner.