



Media Release
27 April 2023

Australia PBS Medicine Listing Announcement a Positive Step Forward for Crohn's and Colitis Patients, Says Crohn's and Colitis Australia

Australia, 27 April 2023 – Crohn's and Colitis Australia (CCA) has welcomed the announcement made on 26 April by the Australian Government, regarding the listing of new medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), including medications for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

As a leading charity and advocacy organisation for people living fearlessly with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), CCA believes that this decision will significantly benefit the estimated over 100,000 Australians who live with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, collectively known as IBD.

People with IBD live with chronic, life-long conditions and as a result they have high frequency interactions with the health system to manage their condition. People with IBD can suffer chronic pain, bloody diarrhoea with frequent bowel movements up to 20-30 times a day, weight loss, anaemia and fatigue, severely impacting their everyday functioning. The chronic and relapsing nature of the condition and common onset between the ages of 15-30 years mean that young people can be impacted during a time of social and emotional development. In a 2013 study [‘Improving Inflammatory Bowel Disease care across Australia’](#) by PriceWaterhouse Coopers healthcare costs, productivity losses and other indirect costs were estimated to be over \$2.7 billion.

The new prescribing policy will have a positive effect on those living with IBD by reducing costs of managing their condition through decreased costs of some regular medications and, for some, savings from less frequent routine GP visits. The policy will also give those living with IBD increased convenience by not having to see a GP or pharmacist as often for routine prescriptions to manage their condition.

CCA particularly welcomes the inclusion of aminosaliclates on the new listings, a commonly used class of medications used to Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

"We are thrilled with this announcement, and we believe that it will make a significant difference in the lives of those living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis," said Leanne Raven, CEO of Crohn's and Colitis Australia. "The day to day impact of the costs of multiple medications, GP and specialist visits and investigations are a serious detriment to the lives of those living with IBD and often also facing a reduced earning capacity due to the impact of their chronic disease on their professional work. This is a timely initiative by the federal government with inflation impacting the cost of living and time poor families people with Crohn's and colitis will be relieved having to pay less for their medication and be less worried about prescriptions running out every month".

CCA also welcomes the news that several of the medicines included in the *New and Amended Listings for Increased Dispensing Quantities* support those Australians living with mental health



conditions. IBD and mental health often present as comorbidities: in a 2018 report by CCA [‘My IBD Experience: Australian inflammatory bowel disease patient experience of health care’](#) over 50% of those living with IBD reported some level of psychological distress.

The 60-day prescribing policy for stable, ongoing conditions was a recommendation of the clinical experts at the independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) in 2018. The Australian Government estimates that the new listings will save patients approximately \$100 million in out-of-pocket expenses each year.

Crohn's and Colitis Australia continues to advocate for the needs of people living with IBD, and this announcement is a significant step in the right direction. The organisation looks forward to working with the government and healthcare professionals to improve access to quality care for those living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

- ends -

For media enquiries contact Julie Weldon 0423 110 802 or at news@crohnsandcolitis.org.au.

ABOUT CROHN'S & COLITIS AUSTRALIA

Crohn's & Colitis Australia (CCA) has been working with people living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, healthcare professionals, governments and the public to minimise the impact that these conditions have on the community since 1985. In that time, CCA has been the only Australian organisation working with and for patients and their families, the doctors that treat them, and the policymakers who can bring about change. CCA provides high quality information, supports life-changing research and campaigns vigorously – for more knowledge, better services and more support for people affected by inflammatory bowel disease. For more information, visit:

<https://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.au/>