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Patients welcome new Parkinson's treatment PBS listing

Australians living with Parkinson's are welcoming the Federal Government's listing today of a new Parkinson's treatment on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The new treatment, VYALEV® (foslevodopa with foscarbidopa), is administered under the skin via a 24-hour infusion and is now available under the PBS, following a tireless campaign from advocacy group Parkinson's Australia.

The treatment helps restore dopamine levels in the brain to reduce on and off periods that can persist for patients under traditional oral therapies. It gained Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approval last year but was unaffordable for most patients.

Olivia Nassaris, CEO Parkinson's Australia said the decision reflects the important role the community has in shaping PBS priorities: "Parkinson's Australia has advocated for access to VYALEV® in Australia to ensure people living with advanced Parkinson's have a wider choice of treatments that can help improve daily living," she said. "Throughout this process consumer voices have been vital in helping decision makers understand the impacts of living with Parkinson's. We are delighted the Australian Government has made this treatment affordable and available for the Parkinson's community."

Young Onset Parkinson's patient Craig Gillespie said the treatment has the potential to be life changing. "Oral medications have begun to lose their efficacy for me," Craig said. "I have lots of on and off periods. This new treatment will mean I can be a better dad, a better husband and stay in the workforce longer."

Participant in the treatment's trial Paula Argy vouches for the transformative effects. "This has given me another chance for life after living with Parkinson's for more than 30 years," Paula said. "After being housebound for five years I've regained my mobility and independence. I hope the listing of this treatment will provide other Australians the same chance to regain quality of life."

Ms Nassaris said the organisation worked relentlessly to achieve the PBS listing for people living with Parkinson's in Australia. "I want to thank the Australians who gave us the honour of telling their stories as we campaigned for this result," she said. "We presented impact statements not just from those living with Parkinson's but family and friends who had also seen the changes in their loved ones trialling VYALEV®. We also told the stories of people living with Parkinson's who had no other alternatives for advanced treatments – Australians living in hope that VYALEV® would go on the PBS."

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ABOUT PARKINSON'S

There are over 150,000+ Australians with Parkinson's. Parkinson's is the fastest growing neurological condition and second most prevalent after dementia.

Parkinson's is an incurable, progressive, whole-body condition. It is characterised by symptoms like tremor, muscle rigidity, slowness of movement and difficulty with balance resulting from the loss of dopamine-producing brain cells. As Parkinson's progresses people experience increased motor fluctuations, difficulty swallowing, recurrent falls, abnormal involuntary movement (dyskinesia) and need help performing daily activities.4 This can result in high rates of disability, financial insecurity and significant burden on carers. The exact cause of Parkinson's is unknown, but can be triggered by a combination of factors, including environmental, genetics and ageing.

ABOUT PARKINSON'S AUSTRALIA

Parkinson's Australia is the national advocacy body for people living with Parkinson's, their families and carers, researchers and health professionals. We promote the best possible quality of life for people with Parkinson's.

We advocate for the Parkinson's community on issues of national significance. We work to reduce the impact of Parkinson's by promoting best practice care to ensure that people can maximise their opportunities to live well and maintain their independence.