



July 15th, 2011

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Osteoporosis Australia (OA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry into the Government's administration of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Osteoporosis Australia is a national not-for-profit and is the premier consumer body for osteoporosis and bone health. Our aim is to bring awareness, education and advocacy to this condition. We are committed to supporting and funding research into prevention, diagnosis and management with the input of some of Australia's leading experts on our medical and scientific committee.

Our mission is to reduce the incidence of osteoporosis and osteoporotic fractures, so that all Australians can have healthy bones and keep their independence.

More than two million Australians are affected by osteoporosis; a condition that occurs when bones lose their minerals at a faster rate than their body can replace them. This causes the bones to become thinner and less dense, so even a minor bump or accident can cause serious fractures. These fractures can lead to loss of independence, muscle weakness, chronic pain, disability and even premature death.

Presently, one in three men and two in three women over the age of sixty will be diagnosed with an osteoporotic fracture. With an ageing population, over the next decade these figures are expected to increase by twenty percent. It is crucial to ensure there are adequate resources to facilitate research, prevention, diagnosis and management of this disease.

OA's interest in this inquiry is related to the products on the PBS available to treat osteoporosis. There are new innovations currently under investigation in this area, and we want to make certain if they are found to be cost effective they will be listed in a timely manner so patients can receive them if and when they need them.

We are concerned the government has delayed the listing of some new products on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme despite the fact that they have successfully met all of the criteria specified in the current independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) process. This process is recognised worldwide as a being a transparent and effective process. This process has already ensured the medicines approved for listing on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme are cost effective and appropriate for funding on the PBS.



This decision also adds an element of uncertainty and risk for the pharmaceutical industry and it would be very concerning if they delayed bringing new medicines and treatments to the Australian market. Hence, we are very concerned about the precedent that is being set.

We urge the Committee to make recommendations about this measure and to reinstate the system that had been working effectively in the past.

Yours sincerely

Shelley Evans
Chief Executive Officer
Osteoporosis Australia