

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

REFERENCES COMMITTEE

The Government's administration of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

SUBMISSION ATTACHMENT

SUBMISSION NUMBER: 48b

SUBMITTER: Elizabeth Trapani

11 July 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUPPORT FOR INCLUSION OF BOTOX TREATMENT FOR HYPERHIDROSIS ON PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME

Two to three percent of the Australian population suffer from excessive sweating, or hyperhidrosis. Severe cases involve excessive sweating under arms, on feet or hands. The condition is debilitating and directly contributes to depression. Sufferers feel ashamed, embarrassed and, in the case of school-aged children, attract bullying. It also results in impairment and loss of quality of life, difficulty in study and employment and loss of opportunity.

The Skin & Cancer Foundation Inc is Australia's largest specialist dermatology centre of excellence. With 24 specialist clinics, including hyperhidrosis, education for Australian and overseas dermatology registrars and graduates, and clinical research, we strongly support the use of injectibles (Botox) in the treatment of hyperhidrosis. For many, it is the only effective treatment.

Our hyperhidrosis clinic has seen approximately 2700 patients over the past two years, many which have been treated successfully with Botox injections. As a training facility, our fees are lower than in private dermatology clinics. However, the cost to patients is significant.

Costs:

Costs	SCF Fee	Medicare Rebate	Comments
Initial consultation	\$190	\$70.00	
Review consultation	\$115	\$35.15	3 monthly reviews required
Iontophoresis Treatment For hands and feet (Medication* delivered in bath with mild electric current)	\$25	NIL	1 or 2 treatments per week
*Glycopyrronium Bromide 500ml (Medication as per above)	\$85	NIL	New bottle required every 5 treatments
Botox Injection- lasting approx 6- 12 months	\$13 per unit	NIL	70 – 150 units required (\$910 to \$1,950)

The absence of a Medicare rebate for this essential treatment is of concern, as it discourages patients from embarking on effective treatment. In many cases, the Foundation sees patients who have not been treated in the past and who have endured depression – for which Medicare has funded prescription drugs, without solving the basic problem.

The Foundation is therefore strongly advocating the listing of Botox, prescribed by a qualified Dermatologist, for treatment of hyperhidrosis.

Yours sincerely

Chris Arnold

Executive Director