



The Australian Lung Foundation strongly opposes the recent decision by the Federal Government to defer the listing on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule of seven medications that had been recommended for listing by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

We are concerned that the Government has chosen to ignore clear advice provided by its expert committee – a committee set up to provide guidance on clinical need and cost effectiveness of proposed medications. The precedent set by allowing Cabinet to reject expert advice in favour of short-term political goals is a dangerous one in our view, politicising a process that has served Australia well.

Of particular concern to the Lung Foundation is the potential impact this decision has on patient outcomes, including those with chronic respiratory disease.

In the case of Symbicort (an inhaled combination therapy – budesonide / eformoterol), one of the deferred medications, this is an appropriate treatment for those patients with severe Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The COPD-X Plan: Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for the management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease recommends the use of budesonide / eformoterol combination to reduce symptoms, increase quality of life and reduce the rate of exacerbations experienced by patients with severe COPD (<http://www.copdx.org.au/optimize-function/o4-inhaled-combination-therapy>).

COPD is a serious chronic disease of the lungs. The Australian Lung Foundation estimates that COPD affects one in five people over 40. COPD is both preventable and treatable. Appropriate treatment, including pharmacotherapy and non-pharmacotherapy interventions, significantly improves patient outcomes and reduces hospital admission as a result of exacerbations. For further information on COPD, see <http://www.lungfoundation.com.au/lung-information/lung-and-respiratory-conditions/copd>

The Australian Lung Foundation is the only national Foundation which serves everyone in Australia with a lung condition. Our LungNet network serves some 15,000 households in Australia

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